MAY 1951

COMMENTARY

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A Letter to David Daiches	MILTON R. KONVITZ
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The Study of Man— The Mind of Man: Soviet View	ROBERT GORHAM DAVIS

BOOKS IN REVIEW

Saul Bellow — Milton Himmelfarb — C. Hartley Grattan
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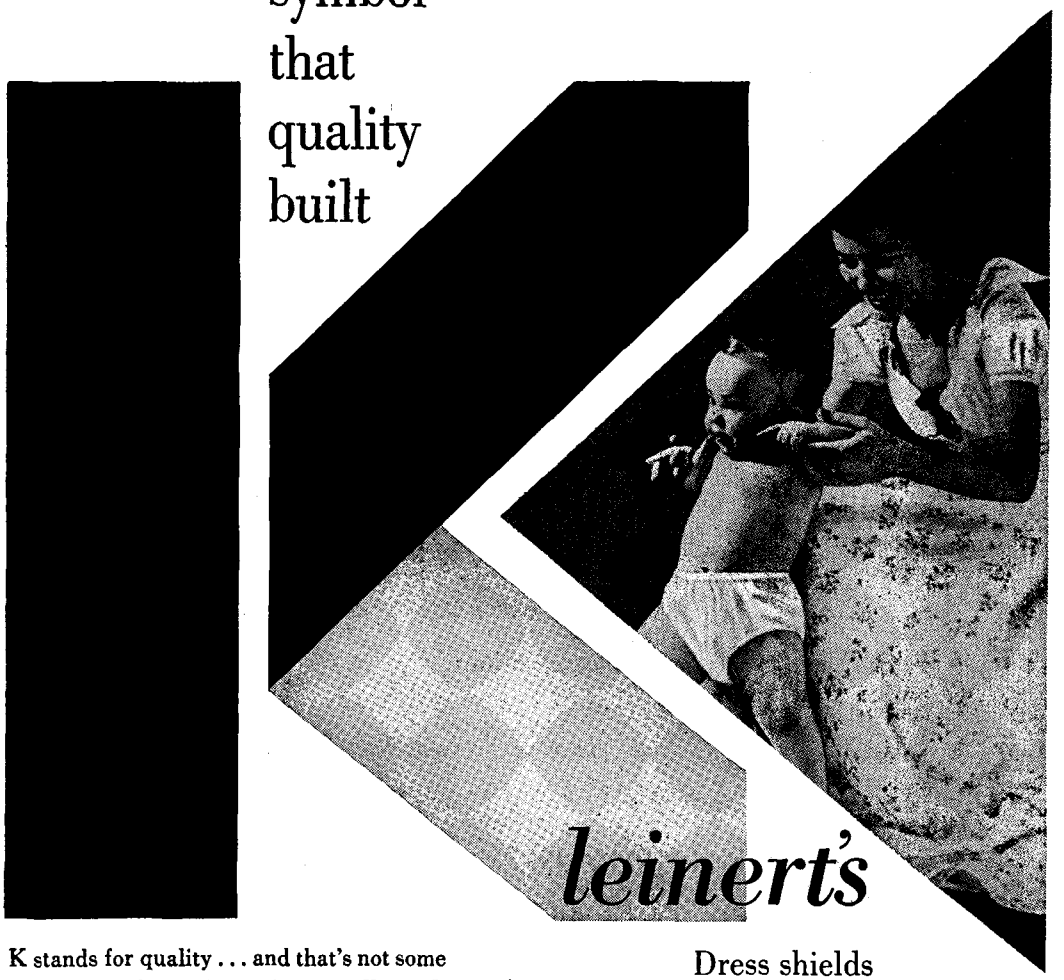

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IN FORTHCOMING ISSUES OF

COMMENTARY

Hiss, Chambers, and the Age of Innocence *Leslie A. Fiedler*

Alger Hiss is in prison; yet many are reluctant to concede that the Hiss case is, in any fundamental sense, settled. How could Hiss have done what he did? Why did so many find it so hard to believe his guilt, especially liberals, but even prudent conservatives? Who is the hero, and who the victim? The answers, Mr. Fiedler suggests, lie in the moral and spiritual history of our time.

Jewish Ceremonial Objects: 1951 *Ruth Glazer*

With increasing observance of such holidays as Chanukah and Passover, what kind and quality of ritual and art objects does the householder find available to help celebrate these occasions? Report on a shopping tour of New York.

The Past—Learn from It or Reject It? *Gertrude Himmelfarb*

In the realm of political thought, a new "battle of the books" is shaping up: on the one hand, the "moderns" (such as Harold Lasswell), minimizing the contributions of the past and insisting on the importance of making the study of politics a science; on the other, "ancients" (such as Leo Strauss), seeking contemporary wisdom in the study of ancient texts. Miss Himmelfarb, author of a forthcoming volume on Lord Acton, discusses the significance of this controversy in our times. In the department "The Study of Man."

The Voyage *Edgar Rosenberg*

As a boatload of refugees flees from Hitler's Germany, one boy among the passengers tries to solve the problem of his relation to the "Fatherland." An unusual short story.

The Bar Mitzvah *Theodor H. Gaster*

From a ceremony of relatively minor significance, the ritual of Bar Mitzvah has become, on the American scene in the present day, a major institution. Mr. Gaster, who wrote the essay "What Does the Seder Celebrate?" in our April issue, contributes another modern commentary on the meaning of a traditional ceremony for the life of the modern Jew.

Rome's Jubilee Year *Eleanor Clark*

A brilliant and perceptive report on Rome in 1950, by an outstanding modern novelist and critic, who endeavors to look beneath the pageantry for the deeper tides of faith and meaning.

The Housemaid *Donald Paneth*

Portrait of Queenie, who lives in Harlem and works for Mrs. Bergman on Central Park West for $34 a week. "I'm going to save up all I can. I've got a lot of patience, and I don't mind waiting." By the author of "Bronx Housewife" in the February issue.

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COMMENTARY

GROWING PAINS OF ANGLO-AMERICA

Beneath Current Conflicts, a Progressing Unity

JOHN CLEVELAND

LONDON

SO MUCH has recently been written of the friction between the United States and Britain that the man in the street could be forgiven for believing that the two countries have never been at such loggerheads. It is true enough that mutual criticism and hostility exist, and in powerful forms. But to take this fact in isolation, as so many are tempted to do, would lead to some very wrong conclusions.

For one thing, it is by no means necessarily unhealthy for two countries that find themselves linked together for common purposes to strain at the leashes in each other's hands, even to the extent of asserting testily sometimes that they wish they were on their own. At least this is a sign that they are both very lively in spirit, even if it has also some less comforting implications. With regard to the damage that name-calling can do, one has to step back and see the new relationship in perspective to realize that it is already far too strong to be broken easily through mutual cross-examination. Each country maintains a constant search for a policy true to its own history and character as a prelude to accepting full association with the other; and without cross-fertilization of this kind, the relationship would stand no chance of emerging organically as something "natural" to both.

If the new association between the United States and Britain—the closest by far that has ever existed in peacetime—were a reluctant partnership owing its existence solely to the *force majeure* of Russian aggressiveness, it would be much less fruitful than it is. In fact, both in origin and in the spirit which sustains it, it is a very different thing, based on long-term historical and economic factors. Even when Russia was still looked on as a "progressive" ally during the last years of the war, there was very clear recognition by the United States and Britain that the future economic prosperity of the world lay largely in Anglo-American hands. There was nothing exclusive in this relationship, but any planning which was to have worldwide significance could, it was felt, start most fruitfully with the two countries whose economic

THE present conflict on Far Eastern policy between the United States and Britain has been the occasion for much heated language in both countries. Largely overlooked, according to JOHN CLEVELAND, is the fact that this dissension takes place within a larger context of Anglo-American unity and joint action, wider than even the most optimistic dared to dream of only a few years ago. The writer, an unusually well-informed British economic analyst who has lived on both sides of the Atlantic, here explores the common interests that now bind Britain and America and suggests how we may understand both harmony and discord within a truer perspective.

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"spheres of influence"—the dollar area and the sterling area—covered so large a part of world trade.

For the United States in particular a major policy decision was involved. She had accepted the lesson of the years of depression after 1929 that her economic prosperity was linked inescapably with that of the rest of the world. Her huge economic expansion during the war years, startling and almost threatening as it seemed to outsiders, did not make her more independent. On the contrary, in her increased dependence on raw materials from abroad, to name only one factor, it strengthened her need to establish a healthy multilateral trading system, and increasingly it became clear that the key to economic security lay in close collaboration with the other major influence in multilateral trade—Britain and the sterling area.

One can trace this basic policy of full collaboration with Britain on the economic front through all the international planning which followed, even though it was later linked with joint defense against Russian aggression. One sees it running through the establishment of the International Monetary Fund and the International Bank, the 1946 loan to Britain, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, the struggle for an International Trade Organization, the Marshall Plan, the 1949 dollar-sterling talks in Washington, the oil agreements, the current joint planning on raw materials, and continuous private discussion at high levels.

If this new economic collaboration is revolutionary, what word can one employ to describe the new political cooperation, symbolized in its most drastic form in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization? Who could have foreseen—certainly not Stalin—that the United States and Britain would both give up their traditional isolationism vis-à-vis Europe to the extent of creating a joint military force in peacetime, stationed on the continent of Europe, equipped with jointly supplied weapons, and handled, under a supreme American commander, by jointly appointed military and naval leaders? With the newspapers concentrating all their reporting on arguments as to whether four or more United States divisions should be added to the American forces in Europe, or whether this or that admiral should be English, everyone overlooks the major miracle, which is that events have moved to the stage when these arguments can take place at all.

It is precisely because their basic policies have grown together so quickly in the postwar period and because the two countries have, in Mr. Churchill's phrase, "got mixed up together" that their current rather frantic cross-examination has become inevitable. This does not mean that one can afford to regard with indifference the words that fly so bitterly across the Atlantic, or even look on it all as a healthy clearing of the air. A conflicting policy put forward by an ally is tolerable and indeed useful when it is a true reflection of a healthy instinctive drive in the country which holds it. It is unhealthy when it arises not from a valid tradition within the country concerned but from an undefined sense of insecurity. Both elements are present in the current hostility, and they must be separated.

As typical of the healthy kind of conflict, one might consider an issue like the recognition of Mao Tse-tung's China. It might well seem at first that the whole Anglo-American relationship could founder on a conflict as sharply defined as this. The British—and this means not the Labor government but British leadership in all parties—have been convinced all along that the change of power in China is a factor in world politics that must be lived with and made the best of. Taking a long view they feel that, despite Mao's intimate association with Soviet Russia, the chances of world peace lie along the lines of persuading China to break away from her record of aggression and come into the family of nations, and in this attitude one can detect the authentic "long-term" approach of British diplomacy. For reasons which are equally authentic in the American background, there was, even before the invasion of South Korea, a widespread feeling that Mao's

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China cannot ever be fully accepted, a view which finds its extreme expression in the belief of many influential Americans that the fight against aggression in South Korea should be carried into China itself. This view is "authentic" to America in that it reflects recognizable characteristics of public feeling in the United States, a determination that American policy shall stand for something noble, a refusal to compromise with evil, and an automatic conviction that no task is too big for America to undertake. But it may also have less attractive aspects—inflexibility in historical judgment, impetuosity, shortsightedness, just as the British attitude may reflect, together with tolerance, an inability to arouse itself to anger—a quality that could conceivably prove as dangerous with Russia as it proved in 1938 with Nazi Germany.

With an issue as important as this, soft-pedaling of differences would be futile; yet can one say that its full expression has produced a rift in the alliance? In practice one finds that, even if the man in the street on either side of the Atlantic refuses to see the issue in anything but black and white terms, the actual policy that emerges seems to steer a course that expresses a joint approach, or at least leaves room for both views to co-exist without danger. Only because both countries have felt the overriding security that their alliance provides have they been able to indulge in the healthy exercise of mutual and self-criticism.

In searching for the common approach that will allow for the valid interests and the character of each country to receive expression, one has to look behind the public utterances to the character of the people making them. In Britain the new Foreign Secretary, Herbert Morrison, called in his first speech for a new attempt to bring hostilities to an end in Korea and for a new approach towards understanding with Russia. One might call this appeasement if one did not recall that this is the same Herbert Morrison who has been fighting Communism successfully in the Labor party for more than thirty years and who, knowing its real significance, refused to make any compromise with it even during the heyday of the Popular Front in the 1930's. Similarly, the British would be wise to consider who, in fact, in America is calling for war against China proper, and whether these calls to arms have any real popular support among the actual policy-makers. There is a great deal of difference between getting excited at an idea and facing up to the practical questions involved in carrying it through. The Americans thrive on excitement; the British on calm. Both peoples move into a middle position, the Americans still sounding forth with denunciations and the British still relying on understatement, when argument has to be translated into action.

Short of extremists coming to power in either country, there is no insoluble problem on the major issues of policy. The argument always seems more serious than it really is because of an irrational hostility which elements in each country like to indulge in for reasons more related to their own weaknesses than to those of the other.

To the British, the American scene is exasperating because it represents to them the evil that, to the respectable poor, seems the most shocking of all sins: waste. The British are now poor; their resources have to be shared out parsimoniously among the many aims that lie before them: defense, recovery, investment, and the raising of living standards. How galling it is to be aware all the time that on the other side of the Atlantic is a people whose resources are said to be almost unlimited and who deploy this wealth, so it seems, with extravagance, corruption—and waste. How much more wisely, the British feel, they could use even a small portion of the resources so conspicuously wasted in the United States.

Envy clings for comfort to a sense of superiority. Favors are accepted gratefully, but with little disposition to admit that there is anything very remarkable in a civilization which can produce all this largesse. The Americans, certain that it springs from the American Idea, are quite ready to hand over

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with their gifts the secret of their own accomplishment. The lesson—"free enterprise"—can be had for nothing; indeed the teacher will pay the pupil to listen. But the pupil draws back politely—or rudely. Even if the Americans are good at production, he says, where is all this increase in wealth leading them? They produce more, to buy more, to consume more, all with a sense of mounting frustration, as it seems from abroad. There is something unrestrained, unbalanced, and febrile about the sound of the American way of life as it echoes across three thousand miles of ocean. The American seems a disquieting ally because he lacks the one quality which the Briton values above everything—a sense of patient, tolerant happiness.

SEVENTY years ago, the British historian Seeley, in his famous lectures, *The Expansion of England*, could say: "I suppose there has never been in any community so much happiness, or happiness of a kind so little demoralising, as in the United States." No English publicist would dream of saying this today. Perhaps some Americans might feel reluctant to say it too. But the strange thing about the British is that they seem almost relieved, for personal reasons, that the United States has, after all, a weakness as great in its own way as their own. They are able to concede that the Americans are clever at many things, but they would feel it in some way a reflection on their own ability if they had to concede that the Americans not only have all the material things, but in addition the secret to a new way of life. Even when they admire something American —like TVA or *Oklahoma!*—they are careful to keep this admiration strictly in its place. They are unwilling to generalize from it freely, as Seeley would have done, because they have lost the self-confidence of Seeley's England.

Unable, because of pride and envy, to open their minds fully to what is genuinely new and constructive in American life, they prefer to attack the obvious weaknesses and to shelter behind shibboleths. One sees this reflected in a British periodical like the *New Statesman and Nation*, which sees no irony in the fact that while it encourages its readers week after week to feel that there is something basically wrong with America, it is at the same time constantly calling on Britain for the qualities which the United States expresses better than any other nation. They want Britain to think big and work fast, to organize industry along large-scale lines, to develop new administrative and governmental techniques, to take risks, to cut away from traditional notions that hamper progress. But there is a block in their mind at recognizing that much of what they are after finds its fullest expression in the United States, because they cannot face the implications. Until now, Britain, for all its social democracy, has lived on a tradition filtered down from above. It is disturbing to democrats to have to admit that much of that "Americanism" which can so easily be made fun of comes, in fact, from liberating the force that surges up from below.

With great acuteness, a writer in the recent special issue of *Fortune* devoted to a study of the American Idea has pointed out that the intensity with which European intellectuals reject American "culture," as they understand it, and urge this rejection upon the people, arises not because "Americanism" is alien and repulsive, but rather because it is alien and attractive. Speed, noise, violence, mass production, the worship of material goods, and the reduction of everything to the lowest common denominator—exemplified to Europeans in Hollywood movies, commercial radio, and the *Reader's Digest*—make an immense appeal to the masses in all countries. The British, like other Europeans, are not really rejecting America when they express their hostility to Yankee culture. They are rejecting the trend of the times in their own country, conscious that they have lost so much of what they once had, and that even though they are now producing something new and good, they are being carried along by a force which is not really native to their own desires.

There is then a constant struggle in the

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British mind between self-assurance and its opposite. Under the first influence Britain remains calm and tolerant; under the other, hostile and resentful. The greatest hope for the future in restoring Britain's self-confidence is the fact that she is now independent of Marshall Plan aid. But there will always be an irritant—which must not bother Americans—in the fact that, whether she likes it or not, Britain is bound to feel herself growing more "American" as she progressively liberates herself from old-fashioned industrial techniques and from the survivals of class tradition.

Perhaps it is not too fanciful to see a small but amusing example of these mixed motives in the Labor party publication: *Fact*. Originally a simple information bulletin, *Fact* was recently transformed in style and format into an exact copy of *Time*. What must the editors of *Fact* feel at having had to make this compromise with the devil? Probably a slight sense of guilt, and a determination to resist in the future, even more sharply than before, all American cultural influence.

There are no such complications of personal self-esteem in the way Britain looks at Russia. There is such an unbridgeable gulf between the ways of life in both countries that Britons do not feel the need to express their own self-assurance in terms of fault-finding with the Russians. American observers are quite correct therefore (though they often draw the wrong conclusions from it) in pointing out that the British seem more afraid of being swallowed up by America than by Russia. Obviously this is not because they prefer Russia but because they know that, short of any physical aggression, which they would repulse with all their power, they are more secure from being influenced by her.

How far are the British, in closing their eyes to the positive, constructive elements in American life, merely resenting shrill criticism of an equally biased type to which they, in turn, are subjected by Americans? Certainly, the name-calling in both directions keeps the pot boiling.

In one respect the instinctive attitude of Americans to Britain is exactly the reverse of the feeling that flows the other way. Where the British feel envy tinged with superiority, the Americans feel superiority tinged with envy, for Americans are still very respectful towards an authentic dignity which they recognize in the British tradition.

But there is in many quarters an undercurrent of hostility to Britain, which unlike the old straightforward American criticism of Britain as an imperialist power or the clear-cut criticism based on policy, is related to something internal, and perhaps inadequate, in America's own way of life. The old criticisms of Britain had a sturdy and dynamic air about them. Looking back proudly to their own liberation from the England of George III, Americans were tirelessly attacking a Britain that still "exploited" its colonies and refused to give freedom to the subject peoples of Ireland, India, or Palestine. The new criticisms, by contrast, seem to arise not from pride but from fear. Some Americans look on postwar "Labor Britain" as a penurious, lazy, "hand-out" state which is not only bringing ruin to its own people but is spreading a poison almost as insidious as Communism itself. Against all the evidence that Britain's economic recovery has made her a much more powerful ally in the struggle against Communism, these Americans seem to feel that the more the new policies which Britain is developing prove successful, the greater the danger to the American way of life. To close one's ears to the facts of history in this irrational way is as immature and mischievous as is the corresponding deafness about America from which Britain suffers.

A United States Senator, speaking of Britain recently on a radio program, referred to its form of government as "National Socialism." When his host on the program pointed out that this term was usually associated with Nazi Germany, the Senator replied that there was no real difference between the two systems: they were both dictatorships, one by an individual, the

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other by a party, and both aimed at handing over personal freedom to an all-powerful state. Almost on the same day, a leading Republican Congressman was reported to have stated flatly in a public speech that the socialism of Mr. Attlee's government and the Communism of Russia were bedfellows, activated basically by the same principles.

Why should prominent Americans, with ample opportunity for getting a balanced view, propagate such monumental distortions of what is happening in Britain? Why should so many newspapers feel obliged to magnify, for the satisfaction of their readers, every report or rumor of a difference in Anglo-American policy, so that the word "British" comes to be used as an epithet of hate or fear?

Surely the intensity of this feeling on the part of some Americans cannot spring entirely from a rational assessment of the facts but must reflect, at least in part, a deep lack of assurance about their own stability.

THE word used by Europeans most frequently to describe the temper in the United States towards the Communist danger is "hysterical." By that they mean that the American preoccupation with labeling as public enemies, not only the Communists and pro-Communists, but also all those who do not always seem to denounce Communists strongly enough, is out of all proportion to any real danger to the security of the American political and social system. They would admire the United States much more if Americans showed themselves to be so proud of their heritage, so sure of its innate strength and truth, that they could take in their stride the grim fight that has to be waged in modern times against home-born treason. But when the cry goes up at every moment that the state is in danger, when it seems unwise to express unpopular views even in the universities, and when, as in the remarks quoted above by the Senator and Congressman, rational judgment even of a mild form of social democracy has been thrown out of the window, the feeling conveyed abroad is that the American system must contain within it some fundamental insecurity, some awful fear of change or upset, that gives it its only real vulnerability.

It is ironic to see how the respective roles of Britain and the United States have changed in this regard. Britain was always the symbol of imperialist power, preventing world changes, holding on to its colonial possessions, and at home maintaining class distinctions and feudal privilege. The United States, by contrast, was to the world the great supporter of liberation movements abroad and at home, a seething melting pot of democracy and equality, the arch example of a country built through rapidly changing social and economic forces. In those days the United States seemed to have the self-confidence (and the brashness) of a giant. Today, with its power infinitely greater, it seems to have developed with this power a most perplexing fear. That the United States is determined to be strong against aggression abroad, and to help her allies to the same objective, is clear and welcome. The perplexing part is that this assertion of strength should seem to be combined with a fear of all kinds of changes and innovations abroad, as though the effect of these changes, echoing back across the Atlantic, could rock the whole mighty system which is America.

No Briton who values freedom wants the United States to give up its leadership in the struggle against totalitarianism. Without this leadership the struggle would be grave, if not hopeless, in Europe. But surely it is a denial that history has any dynamic in it to fear the influence of the kind of democratic changes that Britain is carrying through today. The dynamic of history worked during the 18th and 19th centuries to make Britain a world power economically and an empire politically. In more recent years it has put Britain into a position in which she has liberated a whole subcontinent from direct rule, introduced self-government measures in many other formerly dependent territories, surrendered

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her dominant world economic preeminence to the United States, and at home taken in her stride great measures of economic and social development. Just as the British people today would be wiser—and healthier—if they could bring themselves wholeheartedly to recognize in the United States a symbol of creative power far greater than the vulgarities for which it is known, so Americans would be healthier to recognize in Britain a reminder that history does not stand still and that as long as they stay democratic, different countries may safely express in different ways the same dynamic surge that has borne the United States forward in years gone by.

THIS is not, of course, a plea to the Americans or the British to change their character or even to learn to minimize constantly each other's differences. It is entirely natural that personal pride and envy and self-assertiveness and the jockeying for position, should cause constant flare-ups and misunderstandings, expressed with all the intensity of outraged virtue. The reporter is concerned only to see whether this is having a pernicious effect on the abiding relationship beneath the surface; the evidence, despite the newspapers, is all to the contrary.

Consider for a moment the issue of socialism. Many socialists in Britain are largely blinded by their doctrinal preconceptions from recognizing that the United States, while being theoretically anti-socialist, is in practice expressing in its own way quite a number of "socialist" principles. The federal government has accepted the need to plan against large-scale unemployment; social security is very well established; the veterans—and there are already many millions of them—enjoy a far more lavish "National Health Service" than is available in Britain; vast social benefits are brought about through low-income-group housing, and through assistance, advice, and subsidies given to agriculture; and one could trace equally "socialistic" trends in educational opportunities, the raising of living standards, and the extraordinarily generous opportunities offered through privately endowed foundations. If one looks to "socialism" to achieve industrial relocation, including large-scale movements of population, what bigger changes could one instance than the great movement towards the West Coast in recent years? If labor's role is the decisive factor, can one ignore the coming to power of American labor, simply because it is taking shape in an American form? Of course the United States is not inspired by socialism in carrying through these policies, but neither is Wall Street *über alles* the guiding principle, and, more and more, British socialists will come to recognize this.

In a similar way, Americans will gradually be forced to give up the idea that Britons, by putting a "socialist" frame around their economic and social structure, have somehow become a different kind of people. When they see how conservative the British mind really is—too conservative, in many ways, by American standards—and when they sense the fundamental determination of the British people to maintain at all costs their political and personal initiative—far greater, in many ways, than the American—they will feel differently about British "socialism."

Fortunately there are people on both sides who are trying to reduce the hostility which is based on catchwords. One could cite on one side an article in *Fortune* last year which tried to show that Britain had made a remarkable economic recovery precisely because she had ceased to be socialistic. True or not, it at least cut through the catchword. On the other side there was the Labor party pamphlet *European Unity*, published at about the same time, which told British socialists flatly that "outside Britain and Scandinavia there is no government with a more progressive domestic or foreign program than the present U. S. administration."

Certainly the flare-ups will continue, and frequently they will be based on differences in approach which no amount of semantic ingenuity can cover up. On raw materials,

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to take a current example, the British are sore because their whole defense effort is being held back through lack of critical raw materials obtainable from the United States. They feel that if the Americans are as serious about defense as they claim to be they should take steps to cut back civilian consumption of inessentials so that the rest of the free world does not go short. What is hard to explain to the British is that American "super-production," out of which the huge defense effort will flow, depends in an indefinable way on a kind of massive uncontrollable ebullience within the American system. Ultimately the Americans will see the logic of letting their allies buy essential supplies of sulphur or zinc which they must have for defense production; but it is not as easy to organize as it would be in well-behaved Britain, which manages these things very tidily—but which sometimes suffers, for the same reason, from a lack of the boundless drive that has made America what it is.

LUCKILY, the future of Anglo-American relations does not depend on getting every misunderstanding quickly explained in an acceptable form to mass opinion on both sides of the Atlantic. If it did, the outlook would be grim. Time, however, seems to ease each sharp irritation; and on top of the excellent personal relationships between virtually all Britons and Americans, there are two basic reasons why time must pull in the right direction.

The first is the rational realization of common interest which, despite the sharp divergencies emerging on specific subjects, keeps long-term policies aligned in a remarkably constructive way.

That there should be this pull towards unity arises ultimately from the second reason, which is that even when Britain and the United States express their current policies in sharply different forms, they are both aiming at the same ends. At home, as we have seen, both are laboriously pursuing a common aim that takes on real meaning, not in some dry ideological theory—socialism or free enterprise—but in the freedom and happiness of individual human beings. Abroad, the same common aim shines through myriad forms of practical expression. The age of imperialism—political and economic—is passing in the trans-Atlantic world. Britain and the United States, it becomes increasingly apparent, are seeking a world society based on the freedom of every country to go forward as it wishes, provided always that it shows no sign of aggression toward another country. Nor, in forswearing colonial exploitation and imperialism, have Britain and the United States merely erected a barrier of isolationism and indifference against the new emerging world. On the contrary, they have given pledges in many forms of their anxiety—it is basically a moral anxiety—to offer a helping hand as best they can. Yet imperialism has not been exchanged for paternalism. Instead, with the stakes of freedom so high, there has emerged something which begins to look like a struggle for a new kind of world fellowship. The *pax transatlantica* can be its basis if the vagaries of day-to-day irritation can be transcended by a recognition that the common values taken for granted by Britain and the United States can be far and away the strongest and most fertile elements in contemporary society.

THE ships and planes are full of visiting citizens. To the Americans, Britain is a holiday country; to the British, the United States is a foretaste of the resurrection. One is old and ripe; the other violently new and exhilarating. Some visitors may sum up the problem of Anglo-American differences in the old phrase: *"Si jeunesse savait, si vieillesse pouvait"* ["If youth knew, if age could"]; but for once this is not a reflection of despair. Britain and the United States, working together, have both age and youth on their side. If they can whole-heartedly accept the fact that they have been assigned different roles by nature and history, they may come to understand that it is possible for them to play the roles quite happily together on the same stage.

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LESSONS OF THE ANNA M. ROSENBERG HEARINGS

Where Congressional Investigations Go Wrong

HERRYMON MAURER

ALMOST as soon as it began, it became clear that the inquiry into the loyalty of Anna M. Rosenberg and her fitness to be Assistant Secretary of Defense would have to become an inquiry into the motives and mental competence of Mrs. Rosenberg's accusers. And before it was over, the problems provoked by the Senate investigation turned out to have less to do with accusers or accused than with the investigation itself—and indeed with the whole process of investigation as currently practiced.

Imprisoned within a rather too familiar rectangle whose four sides are Communists, ex-Communists, non-Communists accused of being Communists, and professional anti-Communists, the intelligent citizen or legislator soon found himself hopelessly bewildered. While damaging facts concerning Mrs. Rosenberg were narrowing towards nothing, significant facts concerning her accusers were proliferating like a unicellular organism suddenly impelled to throw off shoots. The facts spread out to include the motives of the witnesses against her, their stability of mind, political beliefs, views on religion, records of occupation, psychological difficulties, together with their relations with family, friends, and even passing acquaintances. The testimony of two persons made it necessary for the Senate committee to question in detail eight others simply to settle the question of Mrs. Rosenberg's truthfulness. To settle the question of the truthfulness of those ten, it probably will prove necessary for some investigative body—probably a grand jury—to question hundreds, ranging from professed Communists to professed anti-Semites.

Such self-multiplication of evidence is, of course, one of the reasons why it is so hard to smoke out anti-democratic individuals without stirring up an undemocratic stench, and without raising in the minds of thoughtful citizens grave questions as to the procedures currently used in such investigations and even as to the advisability altogether of investigating publicly anybody on any subject that generates public heat. One need not go beyond the stenographic record —and in the study that follows we will limit ourselves to what appears there—to find amply visible the highly disturbing dilemma that dogs most Congressional investigations: how to shield innocence whilst uncovering guilt.

SO FAR as the record shows, the story of the investigation begins with a witness, very active against Mrs. Rosenberg, who saw himself as "victim of a smear attack" and commented feelingly on the "terrors of the 'smear bund.'" Ironically, this witness, Benjamin H. Freedman, played the most conspicuous role in bringing the full-scale investigation about. Shortly after the nomination of Mrs. Rosenberg on November 9, Freedman purchased fifty thousand copies of the November issue of *Common Sense*—

THE Congressional hearings on Anna M. Rosenberg's fitness to serve as Assistant Secretary of Defense emphasized some of the more complex difficulties involved in efforts to destroy Communist influence in this country, and cast a bright light on the peculiar roles played in these matters by Communists, ex-Communists, and professional anti-Communists, as well as on the whole process of Congressional investigations themselves, whose value increasingly large sections of the citizenry have come to question. HERRYMON MAURER, who here analyzes the record of the Rosenberg hearings, is a former editor of *Fortune* and now one of that magazine's regular contributors. His book on Gandhi, *Great Soul*, appeared in 1948, and *Collision of East and West*, a study of China, Japan, and Korea, will be published this month by Henry Regnery. Mr. Maurer's most recent contribution to COMMENTARY was "The Middle Ground Where Nehru Stands," in our March issue of this year. Mr. Maurer was born in Sewickley, Pennsylvania, in 1914, and studied at the University of Pittsburgh.

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a magazine called anti-Semitic by several witnesses, and whose November issue was critical of Mrs. Rosenberg—and mailed out twenty-five thousand of them to a list that included all the names in the Congressional Directory. Immediately after the Senate Armed Services Committee endorsed Mrs. Rosenberg on November 29, Freedman was in touch with Representative Rankin and Gerald L. K. Smith, individuals whom the committee record does not further identify. He then returned from Washington to New York, where he talked for "a few minutes" or for "at least twenty minutes" with J. B. Matthews, a former research director for the Dies Committee, and secured a copy of a nine-page document dealing with organizations with which the name "Anna Rosenberg" had been connected. He also came in touch with a former Communist party member, Ralph De Sola, through the offices of a lawyer who had represented Freedman in libel suits against the Anti-Defamation League of the B'nai B'rith, and who was associated with Joe McWilliams, identified in the record as "the famous anti-Semitic street-corner orator." On Sunday morning, December 3, Freedman talked for two and a half to three hours with De Sola, who told him that he had been in the John Reed Club—a Communist cultural organization of the early 30's—with Anna Rosenberg.

Armed with what he recalled of the information given him by Matthews and De Sola, Freedman went to Washington, visited two of the Senators of the Armed Services Committee, and dictated two memoranda in the office of Representative Rankin, signed copies of which were sent to the two Senators. The first of these memoranda asserted that J. B. Matthews had said "that to his knowledge there is a file in the FBI . . . which contains information 'to prove that Anna M. Rosenberg is the least desirable person in the entire United States to be appointed to that position.'" The second stated that Ralph De Sola had said "that on numerous occasions he was present at the meetings of the John Reed Club when Anna M. Rosenberg, whose picture he identified as the person recently appointed as Assistant Secretary of Defense, was also present." This memorandum contained other remarks that De Sola was said to have made, among them the charge that Anna M. Rosenberg had designated De Sola's wife to plant Communist agents in the New York City schools.

On Tuesday, December 5, the Senate committee decided to reopen its hearings on Mrs. Rosenberg's appointment. During this day, Freedman was with De Sola in New York while the latter prepared a sworn statement to send to the committee. Both men were visited during the evening by FBI agents. Late in the evening, Freedman was visited also by an investigator for Senator Joseph McCarthy (not a member of the Armed Services Committee but not otherwise described in the record) and by a reporter for Fulton Lewis, Jr., whom also the record does not further identify. These men brought with them a letter of introduction from Gerald L. K. Smith, but Freedman testified that he did not open the letter and that he had the impression that the men were Armed Services Committee investigators. The outcome of this visit was, first of all, a conversation that lasted either "a few minutes," "fifteen minutes," or "a good hour . . . long enough to consume two scotch and sodas and an egg sandwich" and, second, a note of introduction for the "investigators" to De Sola, the wording of which nobody concerned was able to recall. The two men visited De Sola the next morning, procured a copy of his sworn statement, and took it back to Washington. The next day, Freedman and De Sola took dinner together. They traveled to Washington, and—according to Freedman—went to Senator McCarthy's office.

THE Senate committee resumed its hearings on Friday, December 8. By Wednesday, December 13, when the committee heard its last witness, the case against Mrs. Rosenberg had blown completely apart. De Sola denied he had told Freedman that Mrs. Rosenberg had instructed his wife to plant Communists in New York schools. De Sola's own charge that he had met Mrs. Rosenberg four or five times and had talked to her once at the John Reed Club was not supported by two persons he had described as being present at the club, nor was it supported by his ex-wife, Helen Winner, and a former FBI agent, George Starr, whom he himself had suggested as witnesses. As for J. B. Matthews, he denied that he

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had said to Freedman what Freedman said he had, agreed that his information was third-hand, and explained that another former FBI agent had told him that a Spanish War veteran had been in a Communist cell with Mrs. Rosenberg. This agent (Theodore Kirkpatrick) testified, however, that he could recall the veteran's mentioning the name of Mrs. Rosenberg only in some connection other than that of a Communist cell, while the veteran testified that he had never met Mrs. Rosenberg anywhere and that he had never heard of her being associated with Communist fronts. Meanwhile it had become evident that there were a number of other Anna Rosenbergs, some of whom had in fact been active in Communist organizations.

The committee heard two other witnesses. Dr. Marjorie Shearon held that Mrs. Rosenberg was unsuitable for Defense department work because of membership in two groups in which there were other members who had been cited as belonging to other subversive organizations, and because one of these two groups, from which Mrs. Rosenberg had happened to resign, was active in national health insurance schemes. Edward Nellor, Fulton Lewis's reporter, when asked to clear up the circumstances of his visits to Freedman and De Sola in company with Senator McCarthy's investigator, presented an account considerably at variance with those of Freedman and De Sola.

Finally, a subcommittee of the Armed Services Committee completed its report on the contents of the FBI file on Mrs. Rosenberg, clearing her once and for all of any imputations of Communism:

SENATOR CAIN: . . . there is not a word in the files, as I have read them, from start to finish to support any of the un-American charges alleged against Mrs. Anna M. Rosenberg.
SENATOR HUNT: I did not see a thing in them, not a thing.
SENATOR BYRD: . . . there is nothing whatever detrimental to Mrs. Rosenberg in that file.

IF THERE was no evidence against Mrs. Rosenberg, why should men have been at pains to claim its possession, particularly when they risked grand jury action if their claim failed to hold up? Why, furthermore, should the evidence of these persons have fallen out into contradiction? Why should there even have been wide disagreement on matters of no particular bearing at all on Mrs. Rosenberg's appointment?

Obviously the surcharged atmosphere in which the hearings took place, an atmosphere tense not only in Washington but throughout the country, contributed to the drama of this spectacle. Just as obviously, the various witnesses were involved, each in his own fashion, in this atmosphere. To clarify the nature of this involvement, it is necessary to construct hypotheses that will make the behavior of the witnesses at least partially comprehensible, and it is therefore convenient to divide the witnesses into three rough categories: fervent amateurs (i.e., Mrs. Rosenberg's chief accusers); interested professionals (i.e., men who make their living spotting Communists); and more or less innocent bystanders (i.e., persons who became involved in the hearings only because their names had been dragged in by someone else).

First, the fervent amateurs. Benjamin Freedman is a former businessman (Woodbury Soap) who founded the League for Peace with Justice in Palestine, an organization uncordial to Zionism, and who has been in somewhat intimate contact with certain Mohammedans in Cairo and Bombay. In character he must be one of the most exceptionable persons in the country. He combines extreme zealousness, extreme self-expression, and extreme self-abasement; he surrounds those emotions with a flow of words at one moment reasonably exact and detailed and at the next monstrously confused and evasive; and his words have at times the effect of sounding remarkably comic. Indeed, the literal text of his testimony puts one in mind of Jaroslav Hasek's great creation, Schweik, the good soldier who is innocently evasive, guilelessly crafty, vacuously talkative—and remarkably successful in his skirmishes with hostile authority.

Why did he write the anti-Rosenberg memorandum? "Well, to be frank with you, I did it to establish sufficient interest so that I might be questioned. That was all. . . . All I thought as a layman was, well, certain information came to me, some of it is hearsay and some of it I had looked up, and I said with what is going on and what you read in the papers, with Alger Hiss and

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Judith Coplon and Lee Pressman and John Abt and Charles Kramer, and all these other people who were regarded as men of the highest caliber—and Judith Coplon certainly was regarded as a very responsible person—I just thought I would bring it to the attention of somebody, and they could do whatever they saw fit. I didn't know."

Why did he quote De Sola? "I never had met a man face to face who had been a member of the Communist party, and here I was sitting with one who was telling me how these people with whom he had been associated were secretly planning to turn this country over to Russia. That was enough to make me a little unnerved. . . . I had talked to him—or, rather, to put it more correctly, I had listened to him for almost three hours, Senator, and when I came back to dictate this piece of paper, which I was told was necessary at that moment here in Washington to make the people who were going to consider this matter take me seriously, I just put down on paper the first things that came to my mind. . . ."

Here, before the Armed Services Committee, was a man evidently very much dedicated to his own patriotic role and not averse to that role becoming spectacular. But here also, it developed, was a man of inward drives of a different and somewhat hard-to-define sort:

SENATOR SALTONSTALL: What church do you go to?
MR. FREEDMAN: Pardon?
SENATOR SALTONSTALL: What church do you go to?
MR. FREEDMAN: Well, I don't understand your question.
SENATOR SALTONSTALL: Well, are you a Christian or do you practice the Jewish faith, or don't you go to any church?
MR. FREEDMAN: Well, I go to several churches.
SENATOR SALTONSTALL: What ones do you go to?
MR. FREEDMAN: But I don't know what you mean by am I a Christian. I guess if I am a good man, I am a good Christian, even though I may profess another religious belief.
SENATOR SALTONSTALL: Well, what churches do you go to when you wish to worship?
[There was a short pause.]
MR. FREEDMAN: I will say I have gone to synagogues and Catholic churches and Methodist churches, a couple of Presbyterian. It all depends who I am with and what church they attend. . . . In 1950, well, I went into St. Patrick's Cathedral, St. Ignatius Loyola, a Presbyterian church on Eighty-sixth Street and Amsterdam and—you mean to worship or—because I have gone to these churches to hear various speakers, and there is a church at, I think Sixtieth Street and Park Avenue that has very fine speakers there. I go there. I go to the Congregational Church at Thirty-fifth Street off Park Avenue when they have speakers there. I prefer that type speaker to the movies or other forms of entertainment. . . .
SENATOR SALTONSTALL: Well, I asked you that question very properly, Mr. Freedman, because I will tell you—I have been told that you are very anti-Jewish, anti-Zionist. . . . You have no feeling against the Jewish people at all?
MR. FREEDMAN: Why, that is the most ridiculous statement, but the Anti-Defamation League uses its propaganda machinery to blast me and Lessing Rosenwald and every other person professing Judaism who doesn't agree with them as an anti-Semitic, a Jew-baiter, and other smear names. . . .
[A little later.]
MR. FREEDMAN: Well, I was following Jacob H. Schiff in my thinking at this time [1948, when Freedman was inserting Peace-with-Justice-in-Palestine ads in the *Herald Tribune*] . . . so I don't think I was a renegade or I don't think I was what the smear bund called me for following Lessing Rosenwald, the son of Julius Rosenwald of Sears Roebuck, and Mr. Sulzberger of the New York *Times*, who all adopted exactly the same attitude; but Mr. George Mentzer [sic], who represents Mr. Lehman's organization, called at my home and told me that "if you don't keep quiet"—after the first ad appeared—"you will learn what retaliation means."

A few minutes later, Freedman observed that "In New York City, the newspapers are controlled by Zionists, and anyone who dares open his mouth in opposition to them is smeared, and they have a galaxy of organizations at every level to go to work on you."

Yet the next day he felt impelled to volunteer the information that on the occasion of deaths in his family he saw fit to use Jewish rites and a Hungarian cemetery.

Such a sharp division of inward allegiance is not unique, of course, but is comparatively rare. Most persons either pass from one allegiance to another or bury their conflict in the secret recesses of their minds. Freedman

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seems to want to be thought a Christian, but even as he is rolling off a list of Christian churches, something prompts him to suggest that he does not worship at such places but rather listens to speeches, which he puts on the same secular plane as movies. Later he feels the need to emphasize his participation in Jewish rites. In short, he seems to want to be a Christian without ceasing to be a Jew, and to buttress the respectability of this desire he irrelevantly drags in the names of well-known Jews who have no such desire themselves.

Prominent in this two-way torment is a compulsion to get along with well-known non-Jews. Note Freedman's unprompted comment on his approaches to Gerald L. K. Smith: "I walked in on Mr. Smith, and I guess, like a great many other non-Judaic people in the United States . . . they think I am a plant or a representative of some organization, and I just gave them a gag that I am interested only in American interests and that I am not truly sectarian. A lot of Americans, as you know, type the Judaic Americans as primarily interested in their own sectarian activities, a lot of them do. Some of them do, I don't know how many."

Split in his statements of inward allegiance and belief, Freedman was frequently chaotic in his evidence about outward facts.

Senator Kefauver questioned Freedman as to how he had first met De Sola and after some time established that the meeting was arranged by telephone.

"Who did you telephone to?" asked the Senator.

"I will explain that," Freedman began. "That afternoon I had been talking to a lawyer who represented me in several of those libel suits I had to bring against the Anti-Defamation League and its various—"

"Who was the lawyer?" the Senator broke in.

"I will mention—" said Freedman, "that was Hallam Richardson."

"Richardson is your lawyer," queried the Senator, "and has been for some time?"

"No; I had different lawyers all my life—Maas and Davidson were my lawyers."

"Richardson was your lawyer; is that right?"

"Then I had another firm of lawyers," Freedman went on.

"I am not asking you about all your lawyers. You say Richardson was one of your lawyers?"

"He only represented me after these smears started. . . . So I asked him whether he would handle one of these cases. I don't know what the Anti-Defamation League called me that day, but they found something—"

"Anyway," Senator Kefauver interrupted, "you were talking on the telephone with Mr.—"

"Richardson."

"Is that where you learned about Mr. De Sola?"

"No, not on the telephone," said Freedman, and he began talking again about the Anti-Defamation League.

"My question," the Senator pointed out, "was: How did you first get in touch with Mr. De Sola?"

"So I called him up that Saturday. . . ." And so on for a dozen lines more.

It was not simply that Freedman had no knowledge of the rules of evidence. It was as if he had an incomplete knowledge of fact as a thing in itself—as something separate from the desires of his mind and the needs of his emotions. He could recall something and forget it, recall it again and yet forget it again. He could contradict his most straightforward assertions so often that the contradictions sounded like the confusion of child-like innocence. He could, when certain questions were put to him, let loose a flow of enthusiastic incoherence. He could suddenly dart off on irrelevant but lengthy disquisitions—one went on almost twenty minutes—so involved, unexpected, and circumstantial that the Senators themselves, somewhat dazed, would drag along in his wake. The events of the *cause célèbre* which he had launched seemed to run around in chaotic orbits in his mind, and there was no telling when some emotion would throw them into a new, sudden, and quite incredible configuration.

Concerning his meeting with Gerald L. K. Smith he gave no evidence of any significance and managed a thoroughly obfuscating account: "I wished to leave immediately, as I had other appointments to keep. Mr. Smith invited me to return to lunch, which I did. I spent several hours with Mr. Smith listening to the story about his life, and he listened to me for a long time about the story of my life. . . . It is possible for me to recall

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how many times I ran into Mr. Smith after the luncheon meeting. It seems that I ran into him quite often, and a few times by arrangement when we ran into each other by accident [sic]. In fact, a young man who was with him apparently became lost and stuck to me until lunch. He missed meeting Mr. Smith and a Reverend who was with Mr. Smith. It was all not very clear at the time. . . . I went to the restaurant with this young man and there met Mr. Smith. . . . I do not recall that the Reverend was present. . . ."

It is not surprising therefore that Freedman was able to agree with Senator Cain in the following conversation:

SENATOR CAIN: . . . You have no knowledge of the—
MR. FREEDMAN: No—
SENATOR CAIN (continuing): Of the validity of any of these charges against Anna M. Rosenberg?
MR. FREEDMAN: No.
SENATOR CAIN: You have not a single fact to support your statement?
MR. FREEDMAN: I have not. . . ."

Nor was it surprising that within a minute the conversation took the following turn:

MR. FREEDMAN: I thought that the thing to do was to call all these facts to the attention of whoever was considering them. . . .

IT WOULD seem that facts were not only at the mercy of Freedman's emotions but also his emotions drew him toward persons whom he considered to be of high social position. ("I will admit," he said, "that when people tell me things I judge from the standing of the person whether I can accept that as true.") This hypothesis is strengthened by the extremes of abasement into which Freedman calmly and regularly threw himself. He announced to the Senators, "Excuse me, you are all expert lawyers and big men, prominent in public life, and this is the first time that I have ever been in any meeting like this. So pardon me if I act amateurish." After one of his accusations was squashed and after the committee insisted that the squashing be announced to the press, he said, "I think that is a very fine attitude." In one sequence of eleven responses to committee questioning, he apologized abjectly to the Senators nine times, only to say, when dragged back to the point at issue, "I don't remember." And when J. B. Matthews became irate because Freedman had quoted him without his permission, Freedman wrote a letter to him which, according to Senator Cain, "stands forth as one of the most feeling epistles I have heard read or have read in the English language":

"Please permit me the privilege of intruding into the privacy of your home by means of this communication to again tell you how sorry I am about what happened. . . . Rationalizing my unintentional infidelity to the sacred assurance which you have accepted without hesitation or reservation does not solve my troubled conscience. Motivated by a most commendable impulse does not absolve me from having hurt you in some manner not understandable to me, but which makes no difference in the final analysis. . . . Had I thought that it made an iota of difference to you, I would never have taken the step I did. . . . Look your boy in the eye after you have read this letter and try to think that what I was doing was for the sake of him and the millions of others in his position who are in this world only as a result of our part in the matter. If what I have done against you was done for him and his buddies, you may feel that you can extend your gracious pardon without compromising your high standards of ethics and integrity . . . please do not feel unfriendly toward me and reinstate me in your good graces again if it is compatible with the caliber of your conscience."

What is more, Freedman testified, "I would send the same letter to Mrs. Anna Rosenberg [in the case of mistaken identity] that I sent to Dr. J. B. Matthews. In fact, I would carry it to her and beg forgiveness."

"I place myself," he wrote at the end of the hearings, "at the disposal of the committee without compensation and take this opportunity to express my willingness to locate this other Anna Rosenberg without any reimbursement for any such outlays by me. . . . I am sure Mrs. Rosenberg understands and appreciates that I had an interest in the responsibilities which she assumed throughout her career with her adopted Government."

These sentiments, which were expressed at length, did not however prevent him from

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suggesting in the same letter that Mrs. Rosenberg made it possible for spies to infiltrate the Manhattan project.

The flair with which Freedman undertook his remarkable performance is, indeed, not unlike that of the Good Soldier Schweik. But Schweik, who was given to tweaking the nose of authority by appearing to lick its boot, abased himself to ridicule his betters, not to praise them. Freedman's self-abasement has very different ends.

When one reads his accumulated testimony, the humor of the performance fades; the essential pitifulness of the actor grows, and with it grows the problem of what roles actors like him should be permitted to play on a very public stage. Freedman's role in the Rosenberg hearings was essentially that of a man stimulated by the discomfort of sharply split allegiances into hunger for impressive non-Jewish friendships, a hunger so great that he made facts and truth subservient to his social yearnings. This troubled man with an urge both to make good and to do good precipitated the Rosenberg affair; in effect he set the form that the hearings and the subsequent investigations would take. And, oddly enough, he may have run fewer risks of subsequent legal action than many of the other witnesses. His testimony, involved, confused, contradictory, and in any case second- to fourth-hand, is, though amply able to hurt other persons, too amorphous to tie down for purposes of correction or redress.

BY CONTRAST, the testimony of Ralph De Sola, second of the fervent amateur anti-Communists, was straightforward, noncontradictory, and unchanging. It was, in fact, the only testimony that specifically tied Mrs. Rosenberg to any Communist organization. De Sola stated that he had seen Anna M. Rosenberg three or four times in 1934 and 1935 at the John Reed Club, that his sponsor in the Communist party had indicated that she was a Communist, and that she had been one of the founders of a Communist-inspired magazine, *Science and Society*. He suggested as witnesses a man who he said was a Communist, one James Magraw; Helen Winner, who is De Sola's ex-wife; and a former FBI agent, George Starr, with whom De Sola had many contacts, and to whom he said he turned over promotional material on *Science and Society*. He described Mrs. Rosenberg's appearance in detail: height about five feet; rather slim; slight; dark brown hair; Central European features; roundish face. He left very little room for possible mistakes of identity.

Apparently De Sola was himself warmly convinced of the truth of his charges. He was eloquent on the dangers of having Mrs. Rosenberg in the Defense department: "It was common knowledge around the Communist party headquarters that Anna Rosenberg could be depended on to see that Communists and fellow-travelers and people sympathetic to the whole Soviet idea were given Government positions and were put in jobs that were important. . . . The danger to the Government of the United States in having a Mrs. Anna Rosenberg near the helm is not merely in her pro-Soviet sympathies and affiliations and her ability to pack the Pentagon with her Moscow-indoctrinated mob, but in the entire set of ideas that she holds with respect to the so-called welfare state, which if applied in full, would soon reduce America to the shambling status of England, and with its sneak attack against individualism and free American enterprise, would bring us to socialism, which is the main corridor to Communism and chaos. . . . If Mrs. Anna Rosenberg has left the Communist movement, let her declare that fact now and openly."

Confronted with Mrs. Rosenberg herself, De Sola did not budge from his charges:

MRS. ROSENBERG: Mr. De Sola, where and when did you see me in the John Reed Clubs?
MR. DE SOLA: At the various meetings that they had in the summer, the late summer and the fall of 1934 and 1935. They were along Sixth Avenue between Eighth Street and Fourteenth Street. The last time was in the Civic Repertoire Theater rehearsal room on the second floor.
MRS. ROSENBERG: And I spoke to you?
MR. DE SOLA: Yes, you spoke about the growth of the John Reed Club and what an excellent device it had been for a sounding board for Communist propaganda and as a recruiting ground.
MRS. ROSENBERG: Mr. De Sola, I don't believe that any human being wants to do what you are doing purposely. Please come and look at me carefully and see whether you know me from my pictures or you actually know me.

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You came into the room and said, "That is the woman." You never looked at me. Do you know what you are doing to me?

MR. DE SOLA: I am looking at you and I am looking at you now.

MRS. ROSENBERG: And I am the woman that you sat next to or talked to in the John Reed Clubs?

MR. DE SOLA: We stood up when we talked. Would you mind standing up?

MRS. ROSENBERG: I will stand up. Now tell me, am I the woman in the John Reed Club?

MR. DE SOLA: Yes, ma'am; you are, I am sorry to say so.

Indeed, the only remotely contradictory note within De Sola's testimony against Mrs. Rosenberg was his expression of surprise at being called to testify when he knew so little about Mrs. Rosenberg.

The difficulty with De Sola's testimony was, of course, that all of it that touched on Anna Rosenberg was flatly contradicted by the Senate subcommittee that read the FBI files and by the persons De Sola himself had suggested as witnesses. Why then did De Sola come forward with such testimony? It is clear that Freedman was the person who drew him into the affair, but it also became clear that he had been privately telling his story about Mrs. Rosenberg at least two weeks before he met Freedman.

ANTI-SEMITISM cannot very well be considered as a possible motive. Queried as to any feeling about the Jewish faith, De Sola said, "I couldn't afford to have such a feeling. My father's people were Spanish Jews, my mother's people were Pennsylvania German Lutherans. I have to be as a matter of birth liberal. I have to be an American liberal." According to his ex-wife he had some conflict in his mind in regard to his mixed origins, but she told the committee that his three wives were all Jewish and that she herself had considered him friendly to Jews. Not a Zionist, De Sola said of the Zionists, "They seem to be people who inasmuch as they have been subsidized to a great extent by groups in this country, could in a sense be useful to this country, and perhaps help stem a Soviet invasion in that part of the world, and I think they should be given every aid and comfort now that *fait accompli* is here, but I don't think it was a wise choice of territory for it." As for De Sola's statement of religious beliefs, while it was singularly loose and naive, it did not at all resemble Freedman's: "It is the religion of the free open space and the Grand Canyon and the better things of life and the belief in the individual man. It is not that I can define it in a narrow sectarian sense and say I am an Episcopalian or a Reformed Jew, et cetera. I think of these things in the large."

As for De Sola's character, the most critical formulation of it came from James McGraw who said that De Sola was a highly intelligent worker, but who charged him with untruthfulness and an urge for notoriety while he was in the WPA Writers' Project, imputations which were not, however, supported by other witnesses. De Sola's ex-wife saw a tendency in him toward ideological extremism and fanaticism, together with an inclination to blame external conditions for his failures in the world rather than his own faults. She testified that he was a truthful person, limited in this regard only by a will to believe what he said.

A somewhat more conservative and favorable picture of De Sola emerged from the testimony of George Starr and J. B. Matthews. The latter had read De Sola's testimony before the Dies and Rapp-Coudert committees, and he said: "I do not hesitate to say that as of that period and as of that testimony, I have never read more intelligent, articulate, careful, and balanced testimony before any Congressional committee. . . . I consider Mr. De Sola at that time as competent as it would be possible for a witness to be. . . . Since the time of his testimony I would say that his statements have been confirmed a hundred per cent—not even 99." Starr, for his part, said, "I had rather been impressed with him in the past as being rather level-headed, a rather level-headed sort of a fellow, and rather likable chap, personally, and I just, in my own mind, could not picture him of his own volition becoming involved in anything of this sort"—i.e., the accusations against Mrs. Rosenberg.

One possible way of explaining De Sola's contradicted testimony is by assuming that a sort of overdevelopment of the memory came upon him when Mrs. Rosenberg was nominated Assistant Secretary of Defense. De Sola had given information on more than a hundred occasions to the FBI, and on fifty

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to sixty of them he commented to agents that there were "bigger fish to fry" than those they were examining. If it is assumed that constant stimulation of the memory through such interviews could very easily lead to a mistake of memory concerning matters fifteen years old, then it would be natural for him to suppose and then to imagine that he did what he actually did in other cases—talk to his wife and to FBI agent Starr. It would be natural for him to imagine that there was talk about Mrs. Rosenberg at Communist headquarters. It might even be that De Sola's mistake stemmed from meeting Mrs. Rosenberg while she was arbitrating a union dispute in 1936.—De Sola's ex-wife seemed to recollect such a meeting—or from meeting another Anna Rosenberg, a Communist and a John Reeder, who resembled *the* Anna Rosenberg.

Such accidents of memory are conceivable. What is hardly conceivable, however, is that De Sola could mis-recollect the identity of James McGraw, whom he described as his sponsor in the Communist party. There is far more occasion to remember such a person than there is to remember somebody from a public meeting. De Sola testified flatly that his sponsor was James Magraw, while James McGraw—there is contradiction even in the spelling of the name—testified just as flatly that he had never been a member of the Communist party or of the John Reed Club. This clash of testimony may well be the biggest item of unfinished business from the Senate hearings.

IN ADDITION to the amateurs, three interested professionals appeared before the committee. Two of them, witnesses to other persons' testimonies, played relatively modest roles. J. B. Matthews, however, was conspicuous; his role illustrated to some degree the interest these professionals must take in any anti-Communist *cause célèbre*. In such situations they find themselves in a position similar to that of political experts on the occasion of national elections. They are disinterested observers, but their prestige rises if they play a discreet part in the proceedings and, especially, if they back the winning slate.

Matthews introduced himself into the Rosenberg affair by way of a nine-page memorandum, a document of considerable detail on the organizations to which *a* Mrs. Rosenberg was said to have belonged, but of no detail at all on *the* Mrs. Rosenberg's actual membership. The preamble to the document, in fact, eschewed any attempt to determine membership. It made it appear that the memorandum took no sides, whereas on the face of it both sides were taken.

The first sentence in it announced, "This memorandum neither states nor implies that Anna M. Rosenberg is a Communist sympathizer"—a useful statement in the event Mrs. Rosenberg be found to lack Communist connections. The second sentence stated, "Its sole purpose is to point out that the name of Anna Rosenberg was publicly recorded as having been affiliated with four Communist-controlled organizations. . . ."—a useful statement in the event Mrs. Rosenberg should be found to have Communist connections.

This neat balance was upset by Benjamin Freedman in the memorandum of his own in which he quoted J. B. Matthews to the effect that an FBI file would show Anna Rosenberg to be "the least desirable person in the whole United States" for Assistant Secretary of Defense. In attempting to restore his balanced impartiality, Matthews denounced this use of his name with considerable ire, told the Senate committee that he had never made any such statement in his life, and declared his incompetence to determine the identity of any Anna Rosenberg. On the other hand, he let the committee know that he had heard from Theodore Kirkpatrick—an FBI man who had become an editor of *Counterattack* and who had earlier prepared a memorandum from his own files for the Senate committee—that a William Harris had reported to the FBI that he was in a Communist cell with Mrs. Rosenberg, *the* Mrs. Rosenberg, in fact. Again Matthews was ranged on both sides of the question without having committed himself to either.

The new balance proved somewhat difficult to maintain. In denouncing Freedman, Matthews had declared that Freedman had talked with him in his apartment for only five minutes. Freedman, however, had set the time at no less than twenty minutes, during which he said he had drunk a cup of tea and had listened to Matthews playing the organ. He even described Matthews stand-

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ing in a bathrobe in the doorway and, in Freedman's words, "making remarks to the effect that the country was finished if it [Mrs. Rosenberg's appointment] was confirmed."

When Kirkpatrick came before the committee, his testimony, while carefully balanced, did not sit at exactly the same angle as Matthews'. Kirkpatrick said that he had indeed talked with Matthews about Harris, but to the best of his recollection he had not mentioned Harris's name. On the other hand he immediately added that he "suggested to Dr. Matthews that perhaps it would be a good idea for someone to contact Mr. Harris." This raised the problem of how the name of Harris could be transferred from one mind to another without an exchange of words, but this problem became academic when Harris, now an investigator for the Americanism division of the American Legion, himself appeared to testify that he had never seen Mrs. Rosenberg in any circumstances whatever.

The blow-hot blow-cold attitudes of the professionals reflected, no doubt, a conscientious urge to find the exact truth and a nagging uncertainty as to just what the exact truth was. It is conceivable, however, that the professionals were anxious to put themselves on record in such a manner that they would not look like fools if Mrs. Rosenberg turned out to be a Communist and that they would not look like cads if she turned out "pure." Generally speaking, an atmosphere of caution surrounded the professionals' statements, and their testimony somehow gave the impression of things left unsaid.

IF A SENATE hearing by its very nature provokes activity among professional spotters of Communists, it provokes, again by its very nature, inactivity on the part of those bystanders, innocent or otherwise, who are called to testify. Full and free speaking on an issue which generates public heat can be dangerous for anyone who lives in a community and works at a job. The one noisy exception among the bystanders was Dr. Marjorie Shearon, but she was, in effect, a special pleader: much aroused by national health schemes, she wished to indicate her distrust of persons who support them and to make it clear that many of them belonged to organizations that had been cited by one investigation or another as subversive. Dr. Shearon paid no attention to other testimony and argued at length that Mrs. Rosenberg's former membership in the Committee for the Nation's Health made her unfit to work in the Pentagon, but her argument came to nothing and produced no effect on the committee.

The testimony of the other bystanders, while detailed at certain points, can hardly be called full. Fulton Lewis's reporter kept to the task of establishing that neither he nor his companion from Senator McCarthy's office had misrepresented themselves as committee investigators while interviewing Freedman and De Sola in New York. Isidor Schneider said that he did not know McGraw, that he had never seen Anna Rosenberg, and that he himself had never been a member of the John Reed Club; he declined to answer questions about Communist party membership, and had nothing further to say. De Sola's ex-wife, herself a former member of the party, indicated that she knew McGraw but did not indicate whether or not she knew him as a Communist; she stated that she had seen Anna Rosenberg only at a labor arbitration meeting. McGraw, on his part, confined his testimony to denials of membership either in the Communist party or in the John Reed Club, and of ever having laid eyes on Anna Rosenberg. He made charges of untruthfulness and notoriety-seeking against De Sola who had named him a member of both the club and the party. No other information of note emerged.

And no information at all emerged as to the activities of certain persons who were mentioned frequently in the report and who conceivably may have made up a fourth group of interested persons. These persons were Senator McCarthy, Congressman Rankin, Fulton Lewis, Jr., Gerald L. K. Smith, and an associate of Joe McWilliams. What they did or what they did not do, did not get recorded officially.

IT CAN be surmised, however, that certain of these individuals were much in the minds of the Senators of the Armed Services Committee. Less than a month before, the chairman of the committee, Senator Tydings, had been defeated for reelection on charges of having whitewashed government officials who had been accused by Senator

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McCarthy. This defeat suddenly revealed that the country was of two minds as to how to deal with persons accused of Communist connections, and that more of the voters might be of McCarthy's mind than not. McCarthy suddenly rose to a position of power within the Senate. Had it not been for these recent events it might not have proved necessary to reopen the Rosenberg hearings. As it was, not to reopen them would have been dangerous to the political life of the Senators involved and, more important, to the political and even psychological stability of the country. The wisdom of holding additional hearings must have been doubly apparent when it was learned that an investigator for Senator McCarthy had interviewed two of the committee's important witnesses and had secured the sworn statement of one of them before the committee itself received it. (The dilemma posed by Mr. McCarthy and his like is that they can neither be ignored nor answered out of hand, while to try to deal adequately with their wholesale accusations inevitably involves spotlighting them and their activities.)

In any hearing it is, of course, good political practice for Senators to read as many letters, telegrams, memoranda, and documents as possible into the record, to ask questions they have been asked to ask, even though the questions may already have been asked and answered, and to insert occasional complimentary remarks about the people back home. (Thus Senator Hunt noted with satisfaction that on a long list of names of members of a cited organization there were no names from Wyoming.) The Rosenberg hearing carried this practice a step further; it imposed a time limit on only one witness and let most of the testimony continue to unusual length. The hearings at times sounded like a record each of whose grooves is played over again, but they avoided the possible danger of anyone's later complaining that witnesses had been intimidated or stifled.

In general the strategy of the hearings was very wisely conceived and the day-to-day tactics of it were skillfully conducted. The Senators followed along a series of very tortuous lines of evidence without any mix-up greater than a brief confusion of the magazine *Freeman* with the witness Freedman. Witnesses were subject, of course, to the minor harassments common to all investigations and hearings: questions were asked about trivia such as the ages of women, business matters such as names of clients, and private considerations such as religious beliefs and the duration of marriages. But there was a general atmosphere of dignity, and with one exception the witnesses were treated with uniform politeness and consideration.*

Besides allowing everyone's accumulated steam to shoot off, thereby crimping any tendencies there may have been towards public suspicion and hysteria, the committee took two important steps. It effected good and intimate relations with the FBI by means of a subcommittee of three, who read the complete file on Mrs. Rosenberg. And it rejected completely the doctrine that the burden of proof rested upon the attacked instead of upon the attacker—a doctrine highly popular among Mrs. Rosenberg's accusers. De Sola constantly suggested that it was up to Mrs. Rosenberg to prove she was not Communist by producing the other Mrs. Rosenberg should there be one. And it was a remark of Dr. Shearon to the effect that the burden of proof rested on Mrs. Rosenberg that prompted Senator Morse to put into words the procedure that the committee followed all throughout the hearings: "As long as I am on any committee in this Senate, I am never going to let a witness transfer the burden of proof on the person accused. . . . As one who believes in our constitutional system, I want it clearly understood that the burden of proof is on those that bring the accusation. . . ."

*The exception was Dr. Shearon, the opponent of national health insurance, who had sharply attacked Senator Morse in a news-letter entitled "Challenge to Socialism." Dr. Shearon, who had no first-hand evidence, was in the process of wearing her own argument out when Senator Morse intervened with questions as to her nervous health and as to whether she had ever been married to a man to whom she had never been married. He introduced letters from two former employers, Senator Murray and Director Schneider of the Bureau of Research and Statistics, which questioned her sanity. He took occasion to mention in the same sentence the age of her husband and the name of another man. This interruption, difficult to defend on moral grounds, was without bearing on the matter at issue.

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THE importance of these two steps should not be underrated. The problem of Congressional hearings is essentially the problem of how to delimit them and still permit wide freedom of procedure. A hearing is not the same thing as a trial; its purpose is to get information, not to assign innocence or guilt. In the absence of delimiting rules of procedure, however, a hearing can be turned into a public inquisition. Indeed, under the guise of testing credibility, most hearings pry into witnesses' private affairs much further than necessary. And sometimes they seem to have the effect of belaboring witnesses and condemning them.

Since this was one of the effects of the recent Kefauver hearings on crime and politics, it is helpful to contrast that investigation with the Rosenberg hearings, in which Senator Kefauver, it so happens, was one of the active committee members. Temperate and courteous, Senator Kefauver is invariably judicious in his own questioning. But the strategy of his investigation into crime and politics was notably different from that of the investigation into Mrs. Rosenberg's accusers. There was one factor in common: few time limits were put upon witnesses. But the extra time, which in the one hearing gave witnesses their chance at a full story, in the other subjected witnesses to what must have amounted to a pronounced nervous and mental attrition. In the crime investigations, a group of Senators and a very large investigative staff hammered relentlessly at individual men who did not have full records in front of them and assistants behind them to get additional data.

The fact that most of the men thus attacked were men of unsavory reputation does not alter the problem of what tactics are proper in Congressional investigation. In the Kefauver investigation, witnesses before an information-gathering body were subjected to the most highly public ordeal in history. In effect, they were asked to admit to wrongdoing of which normal legal process had not convicted them. While they were not called guilty men, they were treated as guilty men, as criminals who, if they could not be brought to book for their crimes, could be maneuvered into a position in which they could be held for contempt, misrepresentation of citizenship documents, and improper tax returns.

There are, however, two things which are morally as bad as crime, and one of which is socially worse. The first, self-righteousness toward criminals, is condemned by the higher religions because it gives a false conviction of goodness to the individual person and lets him forget his own responsibility for the world's evil. The second, the idea that the conviction of the guilty is more important than the protection of the innocent, is foreign to the tradition of democratic government; it fits the procedure that totalitarian countries use in the perpetuation of their tyranny. Whenever there are laws to protect the innocent, guilty men will go free. To attempt to circumvent this situation, of which a free people should feel proud, by extrajudicial means, is to weaken basic democratic safeguards. Given the use of radio and television, it is also to stir the public to extraordinary intensity of emotion.

IF SUCH an approach and such publicity should ever be used in a Congressional hearing involving charges of disloyalty or Communism, it could very possibly lead to public hysteria of very unfortunate social consequences, and individual discomfiture. So long as such an approach is not outlawed, there will always be the chance that some Congressman will seek publicity and power through the unholy alliance of righteousness, denunciation, and television. Clearly the time has come to set limits.

In any case, in a country ruled so largely by public opinion as the United States, delimitations are especially important. The hearings themselves affect public opinion, and public opinion in turn frequently affects the hearings. This interrelationship can be fruitful if hearings do not degenerate into accusation centers and hysteria factories; it can be a source of danger if accusations breed more and more accusations and hysteria more and more hysteria. Under such circumstances, it even becomes increasingly difficult to persuade citizens to give information to committees freely.

The importance of the cooperation between the FBI and the Armed Services Committee in the Rosenberg hearings lies in the fact that through such cooperation a great deal of highly controversial material can be processed without rousing unnecessary public stir. Evidence that is actual evidence and

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not an alarming hodgepodge of fact and fancy can then be brought publicly before the committee. As long as the idea still persists that a Congressional hearing is an occasion to try the mettle of witnesses by means of some public ordeal, it may be difficult to enlarge the area wherein facts are quietly processed and to narrow the area wherein they are publicly discussed and recorded. The Rosenberg hearings, however, point in the right direction. They point towards the greater use of off-the-record sessions, which would aid in eliminating witnesses hungry for publicity, witnesses with nothing but hearsay evidence, witnesses who are incoherent, mentally irresponsible, incurably prejudiced, and so on, and who are only too eager to take advantage of the immunity which Congress offers them.

THE clear enunciation of the burden-of-proof rule points toward another and equally needed development. Congressional hearings, since their aim is supposed to be information, take no account of statutes of limitations, the method used by courts of law to take into account the weakness of man's memory. Yet a man's memory is no better in a Senate committee chamber than it is in a court. Facts fifteen years, ten years, even five years distant can be left to the historians and the archivist. The only facts that can stick well in a man's memory are fresh facts. It is ridiculous to attempt to evaluate a man's memory of facts fifteen years old—and to this evaluation the Armed Services Committee had to devote much of its effort in its considerations of Mrs. Rosenberg. If Mr. De Sola and Miss Winner were unable to agree on the year in which they were divorced—one said 1942, the other 1944—there is little likelihood that they or any other two people would be able to agree on what happened in 1935 or 1936.

At present, concern over Communists in our midst—plus what might be called interest in criminals—is forcing hearings and investigations to try to bridge the gap between past memory and present fact: backward and backward go men's minds, searching for the signs of distant affiliations. There is an encouraging measure of hope in the relatively quiet progress of the Rosenberg hearings, and in its calm exploration of the hazards of taking memory for fact. It may further be hoped that Congress and popular opinion will yet realize that the past as mere past is not of the utmost significance, that the past lives only in the present and that to deny that there is anything creative in man—that he can change, mature, and learn—is to deny the democratic process itself. When a fixation on possible heresy (which is distinct from betrayal of responsibility or treason) in the distant past is replaced by a cool appraisal of the needs and possibilities of the present, we may expect that the kinds of personalities washed to the political surface by the Anna Rosenberg case will be safely retired to their private enterprises.

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A LETTER TO DAVID DAICHES

Change and Tradition in American Judaism

MILTON R. KONVITZ

DEAR DAVID DAICHES:

Had your article in the February 1951 COMMENTARY been only an exposition and defense of agnosticism, it would have awakened in me echoes of Thomas Huxley and Bertrand Russell, but I would not have felt myself personally involved. Your article, however, because it is your "personal view" of American Judaism, has started up in me reverberations from some of the deepest layers of my mind; I find myself profoundly and inextricably involved. For you and I have had pretty much the same upbringing, experiences, and education. My father, too, as you know, was a distinguished Orthodox rabbi who enjoyed the respect and confidence of both Jew and Christian; my education, too, was in several cultures, sacred and profane; my career, too, has brought me in my vocation as teacher to an American university campus. However, while I accept some of the incidental things you say in your article, if your fundamental assertions are right, then I have been misliving my life; then I have gained from my background, experiences, and education only a bushel of tares while you possess the wheat. I feel myself, therefore, personally challenged.

Cutting away some of the underbrush, I find that my differences from you stem from our different attitudes toward tradition, particularly as to the function of tradition in Judaism. Our differences here are over fundamentals.

One extreme view of tradition may be characterized as the Platonic view. Plato held that the good is what preserves; that evil is what changes. Change leads away from what is perfect, the Form or the Idea; change tends toward the imperfect, evil. Any change whatever, Plato says in the *Laws*, "is the gravest of all the treacherous dangers that can befall a thing—whether it is now a change of season, or of wind, or of the diet of the body, or of the character of the soul." This statement, he says, applies to everything except to what is evil. Again in the *Laws* he says: "The lawgiver must continue by hook or by crook a method which ensures for his state that the whole soul of every citizen will resist, from reverence and fear, to changing any of the things that are established of old." In the *Philebus* Plato says: "The men of old . . . were better than we are now, and . . . lived nearer to the gods. . . ."

The opposite extreme view of tradition may be characterized as the Emersonian view. If a man claims to know and speak of God, says Emerson in his essay on "Self-Reliance," and yet "carries you backward to the phraseology of some old mouldered nation in another country, in another world, believe him not. . . . Is the parent better than

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DAVID DAICHES's article in the February COMMENTARY, "American Judaism: A Personal View," which expressed an agnosticism toward the Jewish religion along with a scornful rejection of the "pussyfooting" of liberal Judaism in America, has aroused perhaps as much reaction as any article ever published in this journal. Last month Rabbi Leo S. Baeck, in an article entitled "The Task of Being an American Jew," presented an answer to Mr. Daiches in terms of the positive accomplishments of the Reform movements in making Judaism viable for modern man. MILTON R. KONVITZ, professor of industrial and labor relations at Cornell University, here replies to Mr. Daiches from the viewpoint of one who combines liberal humanism with traditional Jewish observance in his own personal life. Mr. Konvitz, author of *The Constitution and Civil Rights* and other volumes, has been a frequent contributor to our pages, most recently (February 1951) with "The Courts Deal a Blow to Segregation." Forthcoming numbers will present further discussion on this central issue of the survival of an authentic Judaism in America.

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the child into whom he has cast his ripened being? Whence then this worship of the past? . . . When we have new perception, we shall gladly disburden the memory of its hoarded treasures as old rubbish. . . . This one fact the world hates; that the soul *becomes;* for that forever degrades the past. . . . Say to them: 'O father, O mother, O brother, O friend, I have lived with you after appearances hitherto. Henceforward I am the truth's. Be it known unto you that henceforward I obey no laws less than the eternal law. . . . I appeal from your customs. I must be myself. I cannot break myself any longer for you, or you.'"

Emerson, who knew his Plato, was here, I believe, answering him by substituting one extreme view for another. Plato was on a quest for certainty, Emerson was on a quest for change. Plato identified the good with being; Emerson identified the good with becoming.

IF ONE is offered a choice between these two extremes, a person with a warm attachment to life and experience must do what Emerson counseled: break with the past completely, tell the dead to bury the dead, kiss one's parents goodbye and turn one's face in the direction of the future and the unknown.

In a way, David, it seems that this is what you have done. The Orthodox Judaism of your father was, you say, "the real thing." Judaism is that religion which you associate with your father—"the full historical Judaism with its richness, its ceremonial, its discipline, and its strange beauty." When you think of Judaism, you are a Platonist and would put a curse on anyone who removes his father's landmark. Judaism is a perfect Form or Idea; it is unchanging; any change is a step toward imperfection: "The men of old . . . were better than we are now, and . . . lived nearer to the gods." If Jews wish to continue as Jews, they should go back to your father's *shul,* his way of life, and his ways of looking at life and the world.

But you yourself, David, because of your intelligence and spirit, find your father's ways and views no longer congenial or acceptable. You, therefore, feel that you must break with the past completely, and so you go over to Emerson's side. For you, there can be no worship of the past. You say to your father: "O father, henceforward I am the truth's." You have made the leap from Jew to humanist, from Judaism to humanism, from the dead past to the live present and future, from being to becoming.

If Judaism is something that is finished, completed, a Form that will not reflect anything that is alive and throbbing today and this minute, how could one blame you? If Judaism is only a mummified corpse, what could you personally do with it except hack it to pieces, free yourself from it and run outdoors for a bit of fresh air and sunshine?

In a way, however, your position is extremely equivocal. You still want the cake, but only for *others to eat.* Identifying Judaism with your father's *shul* and home, you want others to sustain it for "its richness, its ceremonial, its discipline, and its strange beauty." For others, Judaism is a Platonic Form, perfect in its being. But not for you. For yourself, you are on an Emersonian quest of becoming; you shatter the past, you have disburdened your memory of its hoarded treasure as old rubbish.

Now I say, David, if the choice were only between Plato and Emerson, I would be on your and Emerson's side. But you have narrowed the possible choices to two impossible extremes.

There is a third way. It is the way of all that is best in Judaism. For a description of this third way I shall go to T. S. Eliot's essay on "Tradition and the Individual Talent"—and I go to him rather than, say, Solomon Schechter, because his discussion will bring home to you the fact that you have treated tradition in Judaism differently from the way you would treat tradition in English literature or culture, for I believe you share the views Eliot expresses in this essay.

TRADITION, says Eliot, cannot be inherited as a dead weight—the way a son inherits his father's house, say, or his books. The in-

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heritance of tradition involves a number of things. First of all it involves the historical sense. This sense involves a perception, "not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence." The historical sense "compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order." This historical sense is "a sense of the timeless and of the temporal together." No writer or artist can be seen as standing alone. "His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists. You cannot value him alone; you must set him, for contrast and comparison, among the dead."

This is only one side of a two-sided transaction. "The existing monuments form an ideal order among themselves, which is modified," says Eliot, "by the introduction of the new (really new) work of art among them. The existing order is complete before the new work arrives; for order to persist after the supervention of novelty, the whole existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered; and so the relations, proportions, values of each work of art toward the whole are readjusted; and this is conformity between the old and the new." The past, then, "is altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past."

In Judaism we find—at least I offer it as my "personal view"—both sides of the creative transaction described by Eliot. We have the historical sense, which gives to Jewish history a simultaneous existence and which composes of Jewish history a simultaneous order. Let me illustrate this point from the Passover Haggadah: "We were the slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt; and the Lord our God brought us forth from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. And if the Holy One, blessed be He, had not brought us forth from Egypt, then surely we, and our children, and our children's children, would be enslaved to Pharaoh in Egypt." We are taught that every Jew in every generation must think of himself as having gone forth from Egypt: "It was not only our forefathers that the Holy One, blessed be He, redeemed. Us, too, the living, He redeemed together with them. . . ." The past, then, changes the present: I, in 1951, an American, have been redeemed from slavery and Egypt. The past is significant to me not in its character of pastness but in its existential presentness.

And the past in Judaism is changed by the present. When Moses was shown the Torah as it was to be interpreted and applied by Rabbi Akiba, many centuries later, he looked at it in amazement and consternation, for he could not—the rabbis tell us—recognize in it the Torah that he transmitted to the Jews at Sinai. The Torah as it passed through the alembic of the minds of the Prophets, of Maimonides, Saadia Gaon, and of the thousands of rabbis of the Talmud and of the centuries since then, has undergone deep-sea changes. "Turn it over, turn it over," we are told, "for everything is in it." Judaism can no more be reduced to a number of dogmas and practices, or even, as you seem to intimate, to monotheism, humanism, and a sense of righteousness, than English poetry can be reduced to a textbook of abstract generalizations.

In Judaism, then, the past is altered by the present, and the present is altered by the past. Had you considered Judaism in this light, you could not then have permitted yourself to identify Judaism with your father's beliefs and practices. To freeze Judaism into any form is to give substance to Toynbee's charge that Judaism is a fossil; for it means identifying Judaism with the past as utter and dead pastness; it means inheriting Judaism from one's father as one inherits one's father's house or books. There is only one thing to do with one's father, as John Bright has said, and that is: to stand upon his shoulders—and to see farther. For a child to carry his father upon *his* shoulders is to identify his father with obsolescence and to invite nihilism.

Let me for a moment look at this matter from another point of view. It seems to

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me that an identification of Judaism with the *shul* and the forms of observance of one's father lays one open to the charge of idolatry. "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and all thy soul, and all thy might." We have not been taught to love our synagogues, or our *kiddush* cups, or our Sabbaths and holy days, or our rabbis, or even the Bible or the Torah, with all our hearts, with all our souls, and all our might—but only God. (We are taught to honor our fathers and mothers; we are not taught to love them with all our hearts, with all our souls, and with all our might.) Holy places, holy days, holy books, and holy men are important, but their importance is of a secondary, relative, contingent nature. To identify Judaism with them is to confuse form with substance, shadow with reality. To worship the Bible is to practice bibliolatry—witness the Jewish judgment on the Karaites. To worship an infallible church or pope, or a Sanhedrin, or a land, or a book, is to love something other than God with all one's heart, all one's soul, and all one's might.

It was Cardinal Faulhaber, though it could have been a great rabbi, who said: "We cannot separate the Law of the Lord from the Lord of the Law." To give centrality in Judaism even to the Law of the Lord is to set up an idol. Only the Lord of the Law is entitled to centrality as an absolute.

This, incidentally, is one reason why I object to making the Law of the Lord the law of the State of Israel, for it means separation of the Law of the Lord from the Lord of the Law; it means the intervention of a policeman between Jew and God, and the displacement of God by the state. The intention of the rabbis is, of course, to enthrone God; but the effect is precisely the opposite. When you, David, say that the separation of church and state in Israel may be good Jeffersonian Americanism but is not good Judaism, you are again fossilizing Judaism, refusing to admit that the Judaism of thousands of years ago has been changed by the centuries and the many millions of Jews—and non-Jews, including Jefferson—who have lived and died since the destruction of the Temple.

It is in a non-idolatrous, Jewish spirit that we observe rites and ceremonies. "The commandments," said Rab, "were given to Israel only in order that men should be purified through them. For what can it matter to God whether a beast is slain at the throat or at the neck?" Even the Temple was used by our forefathers as an idol. "Trust ye not in lying words, saying: 'The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, are these,'" said Jeremiah to them. "I will do unto the house, whereupon My name is called, wherein ye trust . . . as I have done to Shiloh." To call a place the temple of the Lord and to trust in it in such a way as to displace God is to engage in idol-worship. (We see here the essential reason why Jews find it impossible to reconcile themselves to a religion which says that the way to the Father is only through the Son—or through the Church; for this means the positing of an absolute besides God. The Jew, *per contra*, says: the way to the Father is through your heart and your deeds. Nor does he add: and through your father's synagogue and observances.)

I WANT to quote to you a Psalm which you know very well, Psalm 15:

Lord, who shall sojourn in Thy tabernacle?
Who shall dwell upon Thy mountain?
He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness,
And speaketh truth in his heart;
That hath no slander upon his tongue,
Nor doeth evil to his fellow,
Nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbor;
In whose eyes a vile person is despised,
But he honoureth them that fear the Lord;
He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not;
He that putteth not out his money on interest,
Nor taketh a bribe against the innocent.
He that doeth these things shall never be moved.

I quote this Psalm not so much for what is

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in it as for what is *not* in it. You will note there is not a word in it about the Temple, about forms of worship, not even a word about Jews or Judaism. And it was this Psalm which, according to the rabbis of the Talmud, summarized the 613 commandments. It was in the spirit of this Psalm (and such passages in the Bible are legion) that Saadia Gaon said that he who observes the commandment regarding honest weights and measures may, for all we know, be as righteous as he who observes the ritual commandments, and that Rabbi Kook said that the *halutzim* in Palestine were earning great merits in the world to come by observing the commandment of *avoda* (labor). I cite these examples not to prove that deeds are more important than rituals, but only for the purpose of demonstrating that it is a falsification to give to rituals or to any institution or to any person or book a position of centrality in Judaism.

You, David, are no worshiper of ancestors, and no worshiper of idols. Your intelligence is free and brave, so you have shattered the image of Judaism which you had projected upon the image of your father; and by shattering one, you have shattered both. But you were wrong in the beginning when you identified Judaism with your father's loyalties and practices. Had you climbed up to your father's shoulders, you would have seen farther—you would have seen yourself as changed by him—and as changing him. From the standpoint of a tradition that is not inherited as a dead weight but that is alive and creative, it may be said that even as he is the child of the man, the child is also the father of the man. Piety, said Santayana, is loyalty to the sources of our being. This is the piety that characterizes the direction of sentiment from son to father. But this is only half the story. The other half is the piety which characterizes the direction of sentiment from father to son. Either half alone is impiety; the two taken together give us a tradition in which the present is enriched by the past and the past is enriched by the present, and thus save us from nihilism as well as from idolatry.

Seen this way, Judaism is no hindrance to humanism. On the contrary, it affords one a stance from which one can say with Terence: *Homo sum; humani nihil a me alienum puto.* Jews and Christians have been great humanists without feeling that either their religion or their humanism was compromised. A proper perspective makes possible a perception of the timeless and the temporal together, and of man and God together. When a man knows with Saadia Gaon that God is "the God of all mankind," and that "the worth of each man and his lot are equally precious before Him," and with Ben Azzai that the verse in Genesis, "This is the book of the generations of Adam," is the greatest principle in the Torah, then nothing human—not even agnosticism, David—can be alien to him. Judaism, as thus conceived, stands committed to all that is open and free and is the enemy of all that is closed and restricted. If you will say that this is not the Judaism of your father and mine, but a Jeffersonian Judaism, I will answer that I am not at all sure that they were not Jeffersonian Jews. Though at times they felt themselves possessed by God, they never acted as if God were possessed by them.

You are inclined, David, it seems to me, to seek a simple solution—total Orthodoxy or total assimilation—to a problem that is very complex. Let me try to make my meaning clear by a brief comparison between your father's experiences as rabbi in Edinburgh and my father's experiences as rabbi in Newark, New Jersey.

When your father came to Edinburgh in 1919, he found 400 Jewish families and two Orthodox congregations. The call to your father came from congregations acting jointly. After some years and much effort, your father succeeded in bringing together the two congregations, forming a new united synagogue.

When my father came to Newark in 1924, the synagogue that called him had a membership of some 400 families. Newark then had an estimated Jewish population of between 60,000 and 70,000 (many thousands

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have since moved to the satellite towns). There was no census of congregations, but I venture to say that there were no fewer than 30 or 40 Orthodox congregations, besides a Reform temple and two Conservative congregations. In addition to my father, there were only two or three other Orthodox rabbis with *smicha,* that is, properly ordained. But there were in addition many fakers—I use the term advisedly—who professed to be rabbis: former Hebrew teachers, *shammosim* (sextons), *chazanim* (cantors), and *shochtim* (ritual slaughterers), a despicable crew of "reverends" who were perpetually covetous of money and publicity. They were a stinking abomination to both God and man. Yet these fake rabbis had congregations, performed all the functions of rabbis, buried the dead and flattered the living. They were constantly tempted to make of *kashruth* a racket. This was not too difficult in a city where there were, I would say, between 125 and 150 butchers and many poultry markets that catered to the Jewish trade.

It was not long before my father and his colleagues found themselves in a life-and-death struggle. I am not exaggerating. If I were to disclose the facts, our anti-defamationists would charge me with contributing to anti-Semitism! (The record, however, of the kosher poultry racket of New York City, in which the union of *shochtim* played a prominent role, may be found in the proceedings of the New York State courts.) That episode in my father's life is one which I find extremely painful to recall: for at least a decade my father had no sense of personal security and no inner or outer peace.

Now I submit to you, David, that it is not helpful to judge the anarchic complexity of Jewish life in Newark (or Chicago, or Philadelphia, or San Francisco) by the relatively idyllic simplicity of Jewish life in Edinburgh. Going from Edinburgh to Newark is like going from Walden Pond to Boston—or from Selborne to London. There is, as Mr. Justice Brandeis said, the curse of bigness. It is not merely that with bigness a small problem becomes a big problem; bigness and smallness may be incommensurable.

Please note that what I am talking about is the large-scale *hefkores,* the utter disorder that one can find in a large Orthodox community in the United States, a state of affairs that exists among American Jews who profess to adhere to your father's *shul* and to his religious values. Orthodoxy, then, is no guarantee against vulgarity, corruption, and even plain criminality. To say to American Jews (of whom some 4,000,000 are said to live in cities with a Jewish population of 10,000 or over) that they should be Orthodox or assimilate, and to say this in a context which implies that Orthodoxy will shield them from evils which you associate with non-Orthodox Judaism, is, I fear, to hold out illusory hopes. The evils we see around us are not due to the fact that some Jews are non-Orthodox.

LET me be clear on this point: Just as I am not attempting to whitewash Reform and Conservative Jews, so I am not attempting to blacken the repute of Orthodox Jews. My intent is only to caution against the prescription of a cure that is irrelevant to the malady. Just as it does not follow, I believe, from what you have said that Jews should not be or become Reform or Conservative, so it does not follow from what I have said that Jews should not be or become Orthodox. The decision regarding religious commitment should be made only on the basis of religious faith and belief as to what best ministers to the individual's deepest personal needs.

But you, David, seem to be advising American Jews to base their decision regarding personal religious commitment on institutional behavior; that is, on observation of the way in which congregations and rabbis behave. You ask them, in effect, to choose their religion on sociological rather than religious considerations. The moral import of your approach can tend only further to eat away the foundations of Judaism. If followed, your approach would, in the long run, contribute to a deepened vulgarization and a more widespread shallowness, so that ultimately we would all become hollow men. In a word: you tell us to be or become Ortho-

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dox, but for the wrong reasons—reasons which, if taken seriously, would cause Judaism to crumble. It would be both dry and empty.

There is, of course, much that is wrong, and even rotten, in American Jewish life. But this is equally true of American life in general (as it is true also of British, French, Asian life, and of every man's life, wherever his local habitation and whatever his name). Yet we do not, by any means, despair of American life. Why, then, should we dispair of Jewish life in America? If we are not better than others, are we worse? Amos, Hosea, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel saw no less evil in their own days, yet they were prophets of hope as well as prophets of doom. Their mission was to call for and promise a renewal. American Jews today, as Jews everywhere and at all times, prefer the lesser to the greater good, see the better but follow the worse. There is so much good that must be done and so much evil that is being done that one wishes to cry out: "But yet the pity of it . . .!"

One is torn between anger and pity—at oneself as well as at others; but Judaism is committed to both anger and pity. For just as pity alone may weaken the will so that it becomes tolerant of evil, so anger alone may destroy the world—with all the good that is in it and all its promise of good for the future. It is not only Judaism but sanity that compels us to stake all we have on the good, and on the future—eschatological or natural. Judaism will yet flourish, even in America—perhaps especially in America. There is much vexation of spirit, and that which is wanting cannot be numbered. Yet the crooked *can* and *will* be made straight.

FOR PASSOVER

RALPH GORDON

GRANDMOTHER has a hole dug in the earth;
She brings her great brass basin, her mortar and pestle,
Her kettle, knives and forks; her oaken girth

Bends at the hole; she lets the hard things nestle
Clackingly at the bottom, pours in water,
Then drops hot iron in; it sinks with a whistle,

Sending the steam up, and a bubbled flutter
Storms at the surface. Grandmother is fishing
Now with a ladle, bringing out of the clutter

Her scoured things filmed with heat, and her face flushing
Gleams virtuously above the dying steam;
She's gone now into the kitchen, leaving us wishing

She'd had more things to scour; we see her face beam
Rosily at the window, and her brass gleam.

RALPH GORDON has frequently contributed poetry to COMMENTARY, most recently a group of verse renditions of Jewish traditional tales published in our April issue.

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HOW ENCOURAGE INVESTMENT IN ISRAEL?

Present Impediments and Proposed Remedies

HAL LEHRMAN

THE threat of socialism—nightmare of ultra-rugged individualists—ranks high among the discouragements blamed for dampened enthusiasm among potential foreign investors in Israel. How real is the threat—and the fear?

Certainly there has been socialist talk enough—and from high quarters. Shortly before the first birthday of Israel Prime Minister David Ben Gurion confided to a multitude of cheering followers his hope of seeing socialism, full-bodied and triumphant, settle upon the youthful Jewish state "in my lifetime." This schedule, geared to the life-expectancy of a man with snow-white hair but sensational vitality and abundant health, was soon stepped up to dizzy velocity by Labor Minister Golda Myerson, who promised another congenial audience that socialism would be achieved "by next year." And as late as last October, at the billion-dollar National Planning Conference in Washington, Mrs. Myerson again defiantly proclaimed in the teeth of a predominantly middle-class audience that her party, the Labor Zionist Mapai, was irrevocably dedicated to ultimate socialism.

However, when coolly analyzed, such florid predictions and challenges show themselves to be little more than inspirations of the oratorical moment, prompted by a desire to satisfy the yearnings of Mapai's rank and file, for whom socialist aspirations are as natural as mother's milk. Nobody need worry about them—and indeed, very few investors have, except an occasional timorous soul over-allergic to the slightest whiff of Marxist brimstone.

FIRST of all, Israel has less socialism—in the sense of *government* ownership or management—than a good many countries whose regimes are far from Marxist in persuasion. Apart from some natural resources, ports, and such utilities as rails, telephones, and telegraph—all inherited from the Mandate—the State of Israel enjoys virtually no proprietary controls in any economic sector. There has not been a single act of nationalization thus far under this so-called "socialist" government.

True, the Jewish National Fund—which owns most of the cultivated soil—has close relations with the government; and the Labor Federation (Histadrut)—as the colossus of the over-all national economy—is so interlocked with government that Histadrut is often called *the* government by critics of both. But the Labor Federation's power tends to make Israel's economy, if anything, syndicalist, not socialist; while the JNF, as a corporation in the public interest, is in a position to act with much more than nominal independence of the government.

More significantly, the Mapai Prime Minister and the other Mapai ministers in the coalition government have been steadily making concessions to capitalism—perhaps inadequate, but decidedly non-socialist.

Are these concessions sincere or oppor-

HAL LEHRMAN here continues his analysis of the problem of private investment in Israel. In a previous article, "Israel and the Private Investor," published in the March COMMENTARY, he discussed those factors impeding the flow of private capital to Israel which in general might be said to be beyond the immediate control of the state: problems arising from the world political situation, for example, or from inner economic hazards. In this second article, Mr. Lehrman weighs some of the criticism leveled by potential investors, as well as many Israelis, more directly at the government of Israel itself: charges of inefficiency, socialist bias, bureaucratic favoritism and inertia, and the like. Between them, these two articles endeavor to give a balanced and rounded picture of the factors, both favorable and unfavorable, relating to what is perhaps the most urgent economic problem of the new state. Mr. Lehrman, author and lecturer, has reported developments in Israel for this magazine for the past four years. He has been granted a Guggenheim fellowship for the coming year to aid his continued study of the problems there.

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tunist? According to Mapai theoreticians, Israeli economic society is an entirely novel and wholesome evolutionary blend of co-existing private, cooperative, and "mixed" enterprises. Seen in this light, such invitations to capitalists as the Law for the Encouragement of Capital Investments are not "concessions" at all, but reflections of the increasing role which private enterprise will play—with Mapai's full blessing—as one of the several dissimilar but harmonious elements in a developing Israel. To some other watchers in Israel, the favors and gifts to private enterprise look like poor expedients, jealously hedged to prevent any real shift of power from the cooperative to the private sector.

However, whatever the differences on present measures or ultimate aims, on one thing nearly everybody agrees: nothing must be done—either now or in the foreseeable future—to *discourage* private capital.

Being essentially practical Zionists rather than philosophical Marxists, the Mapai leaders know well that the stark facts of Israel's crisis in production, investment, and foreign exchange make everything, including socialism, secondary to the problem of insuring Israel's survival—hence their readiness to go on giving bits of ground on the right. If Ben Gurion today has become only an interim prime minister, risking new national elections, it is because he has declined to save himself by seeking a parliamentary majority with the really doctrinaire anti-capitalists in Israel, the fellow-traveling, pro-Kremlin Mapam. Only if the latter should unexpectedly win at the polls would there be some reason for investors to fear socialist experiment. And hard economic reality might deter even Mapam.

THIS does not mean, however, that the Mapai-led government of Israel these past two years has been entirely free of certain moods and manifestations usually attributed (by non-socialists) to socialist-minded regimes.

In surveying the obstacles to increased private foreign investment in Israel, the writer has previously described (COMMENTARY, March) low productivity, high wages, unbalanced currency, and the menace of Arab or world war as investment deterrents which exist above and beyond government's power to remove them simply by changing a policy. But there are other impediments which—at least in the opinion of many observers on the right of Mapai—do exist solely because the socialist-oriented regime has created them or permitted them to remain.

These are: (1) inefficient bureaucracy; (2) excessive economic controls badly applied; (3) exorbitant privileges for Histadrut; (4) unfavorable treatment of private enterprise; and (5) government failure to provide sufficient attractions for the wary private foreign capital which Israel must somehow win over. Let us now examine these contentions.

BUREAUCRACY: During her three short years of troubled independence, Israel has, it is said, shown positive genius for perfecting the kind of red-tape, slow-motion civil service so unhappily familiar in older countries around the globe. The circumstances were admittedly extenuating. In the tumult of birth, the provisional government had to scrape together administrative personnel from all over. There was little time for careful selection, let alone tests and examinations. Senior officials recruited whom they could or wanted; and usually they picked their own friends and adherents. The old Jewish Agency staff, with all its partisan political loyalties intact, went over virtually *in toto*. The mass transfer of Jewish officials from the Mandate administration did help to thin out the political character of the new civil service; but in the main, jobs were distributed on the basis of *whom* the applicant knew rather than *what* he knew. The need for improvisation left the door wide open to patronage and incompetents.

In Jewish Palestine, fierce allegiance had always been owed to one's party, and it would have been astounding for things to become otherwise overnight in the new Israel. Today most ministries and bureaus of the Israeli civil service are composed, from clerks up, largely of members of the same party as the director. Even when—as in the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Trade—the uppermost levels have been filled by experts rather than by partisans, lower echelons are predominantly political. The opposition has charged in the Knesset, without successful contradiction, that some functionaries have been fired simply because they were

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ultimately revealed *not* to be party members.

An Israeli Institute of Public Administration exists, and an impeccably selected civil service board has been setting up procedures, grades, standards, training programs—and examinations, at least for new openings up to certain levels. But all this is very slow taking hold. Some departments—notably police, postal, and telephone—are understaffed; but others are already so crowded that one wonders how many of the new jobs, available strictly on merit, there will be. As for present staff, it is now encrusted in tenure and occupancy, and any sweeping housecleaning would encounter massive resistance.

There are numerous exceptions to the prevailingly dreary picture. The Israeli foreign service in Western countries, notably in the United States, is devoted and competent. The Israeli delegate to a twenty-nation public personnel seminar at Lake Success was unanimously elected its *rapporteur-général;* even the Egyptian representative voted for him! But normally the *pakid* ("civil servant," a Hebrew word which has grown almost as notorious as *protektzia,* meaning "pull") is inclined to be arrogant, a buck-passer, and a master of obfuscation. He is undoubtedly honest and bribe-proof (in honorable contrast to his like in some other Middle Eastern countries), despite low pay. But he is also majestically inefficient and exasperating.

NOWHERE have these deficiencies been more noticed—and more damaging to the national interest—than in the agencies concerned with reception, encouragement, and accommodation of potential foreign investors.

In the first two years, Tel Aviv rang with the cries of irate inquirers lost in the bureaucratic maze. Sometimes it was their own fault, for expecting to learn all about a foreign country on an eight-day holiday, or for not knowing how to ask the proper questions. More often it was the sheer lack of organization, method, and final responsibility among the conflicting, confusing, and confused government bureaus. Chaos was complicated by the anarchy created by the British departure, when basic statistical records of costs, production, markets, and other data required by investors were misplaced or scattered around the country. Delay and waste were aggravated by official ignorance of the investor's needs, and by instinctive distrust of his intentions. In the vital year of 1949-50 the Ministry of Trade and Industry—an obvious Mecca for any inquiring investor—was left without any minister at all, for internal political reasons. The result was the alienation of numerous Americans and other foreigners whose capital might have done much good.

Improvement has gradually been noted since the establishment, a year ago, of an Investment Center in Tel Aviv as the single authorized organ through which new economic projects are channeled. For a time after the center's inauguration, cables from New York waited months for a reply, if they were not *spurlos versenkt.* The months have now shrunk to weeks. The accumulation of precedents, information, and general familiarity with routine has been facilitating the labors both of officials and clients. The inquiring investor now finds Israelis who understand their jobs, keep their appointments, and have some notion of the things which the investor considers important; and the Center boasts an impressive number of projects initiated, authorized, and launched, even the compiling of imaginative lists of desirable enterprises (with analyses of market, production, and required capital) for distribution abroad.

BUT performance continues admittedly far below what it should be. Yaacov Geri, industrialist and non-politician who finally took over the vacant Ministry of Trade late last year, came in with the optimistic slogan, "The Investor Is Always Right!" Heinz Gruenbaum, the Investment Center's chief, is the head of a large privately owned electrical equipment concern and speaks the language of private enterprise. But too many of those below them are routine bureaucrats who cling doggedly to the habits of their trade.

Foreigners still are frustrated by lethargic methods. Small immigrant investors—whose individual sums can add up to a substantial total—are left to flounder almost entirely for themselves. The Investment Center still is not fully a "center"; it is compelled to resort too often in its turn to the various ministries. Towering paper-work and flagrant delays remain at least partly the order of the day—

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so much so that some analysts recommend a separate and distinct investment center in New York to handle American investment problems on the spot.

But who could staff such an office? The managers of an American center would need the full confidence of the Israeli authorities. And while the Israeli regime is happy to have the Economic Department of the Jewish Agency in New York operate to encourage investment by handling queries, routing them to Israel, and promoting interest through publications and itinerant missionary work, the Agency does not have the authority to make final decisions, and is not likely to get it. Even the government's own representatives, were they sent here to set up an investment clearing house, would probably not command sufficient confidence. Administrative discipline is not so firm inside Israel that the government would be willing to grant *carte blanche* to delegates six thousand miles away. The economic counsellors at the Washington embassy and Israeli consulates in New York, Los Angeles, and Montreal manage to expedite a considerable amount of investment business, but they too feel seriously hampered by their own limited authority.

Indeed, the regime does not assign adequate power of decision to high subordinates even in Israel. The worst bottlenecks occur on the desks of a handful of Israeli officials—sometimes the single top man—who either will not allow competent officials, or cannot find officials competent enough, to write a final signature on major matters.

On lower levels there is equal room for improvement in procedures, from the way an official handles a prospect to the way a clerk files a document. I have been wistfully told by an American Zionist with extensive Israeli investments that "one hundred American secretaries would revolutionize the whole economy." At least as important as stenographers, other observers say, would be a few dozen American or American-trained experts in office management, investments, and economics.

In principle, this need has been recognized by the Israelis. Their government, under the Point Four program, has requested a variety of American specialists in road construction, railways, irrigation, technical training, and allied fields. The American Technion Society is calling for "volunteer" engineers to help establish new industries in Israel. And Finance Minister Eliezer Kaplan has publicly affirmed his government's intention to engage American experts for the Investment Center itself. But clearly the latter idea can be more vigorously pushed.

Privately, Israelis say that the relatively high salary which an American would require is an obstacle, and the further objection is heard that an American Jew getting better pay than his Israeli colleagues —or even brought in on equal pay to fix things up and then go grandly home—would be resented, hence ineffective. It would seem, however, that even at a high wage a competent American who could cut down waste or know where to find and how to negotiate with foreign investors in a manner that would increase investments would be a good investment himself. But a prerequisite would be full official support of his recommendations. There are also available some first-class American businessmen, with intimate knowledge of the Israeli economy, who might be willing to accept ranking administrative posts, particularly if, in the interests of efficient concentration, the Center were permitted the management of the government's hitherto independent funds for industrial development. But that they would be given necessary broad authority is most unlikely.

CONTROLS: Only the most hard-bitten free traders will argue against the need for strict and extensive economic controls in Israel. Where goods are scarce, production low, exports one-eighth the magnitude of imports, and foreign exchange intolerably short, close supervision of prices, supplies, hard currency, and raw materials is imperative. The objections one encounters in Israel are not so much that basic controls are unnecessary but that (1) controls have become a fetish and (2) controls are badly applied.

(1) The bureaucratic mind has a familiar passion for documents, forms, and official papers to be filled out by citizens who will return after a respectful interval and fill out some more; and it tends, it is often said, to install controls just for the sake of controls, no matter how small the reason for controlling or how great the disadvantages.

At this distance I have been unable to

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check the intrinsic desirability of the clothing rationing which threw Israel into a furore last fall. But one hears the clothing uproar cited as a prime sample of controls which defeat their purpose.

The intention seems to have been to reduce the expenditure of foreign exchange on raw materials by rationing the amount of clothing that an individual could purchase. But, it is pointed out, Israel has all the machinery and techniques for processing the materials that result in a finished suit or coat. All that is needed from abroad is the raw wool—say $2 to $5 per garment, and less for cotton. This meager saving in foreign exchange is already counterbalanced in part by the mere cost of the forest of paper (imported) required for the ration cards, applications, and records—to say nothing of the taxpayer's loss in the salaries of a small army of ration enforcers, the loss of workers' pay in the almost throttled domestic clothing industry, and the intangible loss of morale in a population required to wear its trousers threadbare.

Or consider the case of a small factory, working for the export market, which had to replace a wornout bearing in one of its machines. The machine stood idle five weeks while the owner, after neglecting his plant for days to queue up at various allocation bureaus, waited for an inspector to verify his petition on the spare part. During that time considerably more foreign exchange was lost through the idleness of the machine than the bearing was worth. Under the Mandate, the British also controlled such items. But they permitted suppliers to sell a limited monthly quota to recognized customers, reserving their inspection apparatus for large, unusual, or otherwise suspicious orders. The Israeli system seems intent on controlling every request, however trivial.

(2) Where controls are unquestionably needed, the *manner* of their implementation is of cardinal importance. In Israel, it is contended, controls quite correct in theory are often vitiated in practice. A chief sinner is administrative sluggishness. To cite a verified instance: It took one man fifty-one days—and innumerable trips to Jerusalem and the Kirya in Tel Aviv—to obtain a letter of credit against an *approved* order for a thousand barrels from the United States; during the interim the American price went up $1 per barrel, eating up an additional $1,000 of foreign exchange.

A MAJOR evil effect of this incompetence has been the decline of public and commercial morality. Poor administration of rationing caused wide consumer resentment. Clumsy strategy in the clothing ration scheme precipitated a wave of panic buying and an alarming breakdown in controls. A reliable private report describing conditions toward the end of 1950 estimated that seven out of every ten Israelis were habitually buying some food, clothing, or other commodities on the black market.

As for an honest merchant, if he knows that an item cannot be obtained because the Treasury lacks hard money or because the feeble supply of the item must be severely rationed, he may be content to be patient or do without. But when he sees that controls at dockside and frontier are slipshod, or that his urgent request is debonairly set aside, he will be provoked enough to go after what he needs at any price and from any source, no matter how shady and no matter how many inspectors keep tabs on him. A large element in the black market today is the legion of individual businessmen who have grown cynical in the antechambers of officialdom.

A further provocation has been the arbitrary, somewhat Balkan methods—later modified—of the drive against the black market: terrifying ultimatums, searches without warrants, raids in the night, confiscation of suspects' property, mass arrests, indiscriminate jailing of accused persons awaiting trial, inadequate time to obtain legal counsel or prepare a defense, stiff fines and prison terms for picayune infractions.

ALSO, to the usual, universal worry of businessmen about price controls in all economies, the investor adds the fear of unreasonable controls which might leave him without adequate spare parts or raw materials supplies after he has sunk his money into a factory and used up his initial stock. And at the very outset he runs into a restrictive situation peculiar to Israel: the difficulty of acquiring ownership rights to the land on which he will build his plant.

Privately held land sells at fantastic prices, largely because there is so little of it, the

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Arab-abandoned properties having been sequestered by a government custodian, while the Jewish National Fund constantly extends its holdings. This JNF land is not for sale but only for lease, without the explicit right of sublease. The contract does run for ninety-nine years, easily renewable, and there is no reason to suppose the JNF would refuse to permit transfer of the lease to another Jew if an owner wished to sell his plant, unless it was for speculative purposes. National ownership of land is a principle deep-rooted in Zionism, honored by virtually all shades of Israeli political opinion. Some investors, particularly the smaller ones, may very well prefer this system which lets them off with a modest rental fee and permits them to spend more of their limited capital on plant instead of real estate. And, of course, the practice of leasing land instead of buying it is not uncommon in American and British industry. Nevertheless, many a businessman dislikes to feel himself dependent upon the good will of outsiders for disposal of land in which he has tied up his money on construction and equipment.

A welcome—but small—relaxation late last year freed some 25,000 acres of Arab-abandoned urban land to be sold by the custodian to a government development authority with the right of resale to private persons. (Prices of these lots are not far below black market rates, the government having arranged the matter less to increase the purchaseable land than to increase its own revenue.)

Around the same time the larger problem of general controls was confronted in a cabinet reorganization which brought in Mr. Geri as Minister of Trade. He and a new Minister of Agriculture, the energetic Pinchas Lavon, divided between them the control functions of the abolished Ministry of Rationing and Supplies. Enforcement was turned over to special police units. Geri organized his ministry into specialized departments: for commerce; for metals, machinery, and building materials; for textiles, footwear, and leather; for all other industries, including chemicals, and for coordination of exports. He appointed several Israeli industrialists to short-term top jobs at a salary of $1 per year. He proclaimed his intention of concentrating henceforth on expansion of the economy rather than on its restriction. He promised to investigate the possibility of relaxing or removing certain controls, and to speed up the granting of permits and licenses.

To a limited degree, the promise has been made good. Lavon empowered consulates to issue import licenses on the spot for certain categories of agricultural machinery. Geri authorized the Investment Center to handle licenses of approved enterprises, at least for the initial equipment and materials they need to get started. He secured the final liberation of gift food packages from tortuous formalities. He created a small revolution in rationing by permitting the consumer—previously bound hand and foot to a specific retailer—to transfer to another retailer if dissatisfied; and the same flexibility is now being granted the retailer against the wholesaler. But Geri's enlightened energy has as yet not percolated down through the mass of each department, where the same personnel and pretty much the same attitude and procedures prevail as before.

There remains the charge of favoritism, even more serious, for it involves the entire economic climate of Israel: specifically the unique position of the so-called cooperative sector of the economy, the influence of organized labor on the government, and the extent of labor-capitalism's competitive advantage over private enterprise.

HISTADRUT: By common consent a prime mover in the pioneering and colonizing era of Jewish Palestine, the Labor Federation today hears its opponents call it an overgrown giant that places its own self-perpetuating interests above the interests of the nation—almost a government within the government.

Histadrut, which "federates" all of labor's far-flung enterprises—as trade union, industrialist, banker, exporter, importer, grower, builder, wholesaler, transporter, distributor, and retailer—is certainly big enough to justify the title of "giant."

As labor union, Histadrut has a larger and more strongly organized membership in ratio to population than any comparable union in the Western world. Estimates last September gave it 311,000 members out of a total 425,000 wage-earners in Israel, or around 75 per cent.

Until midway through World War II, each trade union group in Palestine ran its own hiring halls, for which it sought an ex-

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clusive closed shop in any given plant. After a rash of jurisdictional strikes, an all-union system of "General Labor Exchanges" was created. These are Israel's major employment agencies today—registering each worker, grading him on a point basis according to skill, number of dependents, length of unemployment and so forth, and assigning him his place in line for the next available job. The bureaus enjoy clear preeminence in the hiring of personnel for the bulk of the country's plants. A 1949 survey revealed that 89.5 per cent of all workers in 258 representative factories were hired entirely through the Exchanges.

It is charged by critics that Histadrut, because of its overwhelming size, is the dominant element in these agencies, wielding a large measure of power through its omnipresent strength—though not through force of law—to decide whether or not a worker shall be hired, at what type and place of work, and for how long, with the additional power of transferring him elsewhere. This is denied by Histadrut, which contends that, although it has a strong majority on nearly all the governing councils of the Exchanges, a rule of unanimity on policy matters prevents it from manipulating the system in its own interest even if it wished to. This contention usually evokes a snort from anti-Histadrutniks, who point out that the prevalence of Histadrut officials on the Exchange staffs is already a potent factor for missionary work on an applicant who badly needs a job. In any case, no one contests the fact that most employers, who have long been vainly demanding representation in the Exchanges, have an extremely small voice in the selection of their own workers.

In its status of entrepreneur, Histadrut is uncontestably unique. No parallel for it exists anywhere else in the world. As early as the beginning of 1950, Histadrut *employed* over 100,000 workers in Histadrut-owned factories, farm settlements, building companies, and other enterprises. Its "cooperatives" encompass 70 per cent of Israel's agriculture. It is the largest banker, insurance company, publisher, ship operator, purchasing agency, and retail food dealer. It has a practical monopoly over urban and intercity bus transportation. In some enterprises it has a partnership interest with private capital. In industry it owns or manages only some 14 per cent, employing about one-seventh of the 75,000 workers occupied with manufacturing and handicrafts—but it is the largest *single* industrial employer, entirely overshadowing any existing concentration of private industrial interests. It controls the labor force of its competitors. And it is absolutely dominant, as an owner, over certain key branches within, or allied to, the industrial field.

Solel Boneh, Histadrut's building-contractor combine, is a choice example, linked to subsidiary iron foundries, cement and glass works, tile, earthenware, and steel pipe factories. In three years it has increased its turnover by nearly 600 per cent. In 1950 alone it invested the equivalent of 28 million dollars in expanded plant—about twice as much as the probable investment by the whole of American Jewry for the year. Hamashbir Hamerkazi, Histadrut's "Central Consumers Cooperative," is likewise a giant. It is currently adding or planning to add to its empire new plants for sugar, edible oils and margarine, animal feed, fish meal, textiles, flour, and ice.

Defenders of Histadrut argue that the self-sacrifice and devotion of the labor pioneers built the substantial economic foundations which have held the infant state erect through its first crucial years. Few will disagree with this tribute to Palestine Jewish labor's past performance. It is only the rare, extreme partisan of "free trade" who would withhold glad and full acknowledgment of the gifts already bestowed on present-day Israel by the "cooperative" idea during the decades of its heroic application.* But is it equally true that Histadrut today is the guarantor of economic democracy in Israel, functioning amicably and co-equally with private capitalism for combined achievement of Israeli prosperity and social justice? With this view of Histadrut's present role there is widespread and impassioned disagreement.

The critics suggest that Histadrut, invaluable for the earlier and more limited economic community, may now have to revise its objectives and procedures or become an obstacle to the healthy growth of the new

*See Hal Lehrman, "The Economic Test Facing Israel," Commentary, June 1949.

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state. They ask whether the leaders who were perfectly equipped for development of a pioneer semi-rural system are able—or willing—to adapt themselves to the nuances and dimensions of an economy which demands maximum productivity, efficient business methods, and a world horizon of trade and commerce. Do not all institutions, even those conceived in self-sacrifice and humility, incur the mortal perils of pride and self-seeking as their power swells and their primeval zeal fades into a narrow desire to keep and multiply the positions they have won? And while it is true that Histadrut is a unique manifestation of the cooperative form, unmatched anywhere in place or time, is there not a danger here of making the cooperative idea a shibboleth?

For the reader the problem is less historico-philosophical than pragmatic. What, after all, is best for Israel in her present need and growing emergency? It is in this broad spirit—rather than in a mood of picayune fault-finding—that we should consider the arguments of Histadrut's opponents which follow below.

Is HISTADRUT a practitioner of economic democracy? It operates an extensive system of social security which provides benefits for accidents, sickness, hospitalization, and other contingencies. But should such functions be, under economic democracy, a near-monopoly of a trade union rather than in government hands? What about working conditions and pay? Curiously, they are sometimes better in Histadrut enterprises than in private concerns, sometimes not so good. There have been strikes by Histadrut workers against Histadrut employers.

And distribution of dividends or profits of savings or production to members of the cooperatives? Virtually none at all, except for the extra meat, butter, eggs, and other produce consumed inside individual *kibbutzim*, the collectives whose internal economy uses practically no cash. In the non-agricultural production cooperatives, the worker is, it is said, merely a hired hand, with no share in profits. Net gains are ploughed back into acquisition of new plants, bigger inventories, larger capital reserves. This pattern certainly helps build up the general economy, thereby presumably benefiting the worker as citizen. But in a direct monetary way he gets no benefit whatever. On the other hand, it is contended, his organization, and Histadrut and its directors, tend to become more entrenched. As for the service cooperatives, such as that of the bus drivers, where dividends do get distributed lavishly, the original purpose of unity for mutual benefit and efficiency has allegedly degenerated into jealous defense against all outsiders.

Is Histadrut only co-equal with private capitalism? Critics maintain, to begin with, that Histadrut's sheer size gives it massive advantages. A network of interlocking functions and properties makes it an autonomous economy inside the national economy. Characteristically, Solel Boneh controls so many exclusive sources of building materials that it has become a huge trust, able to freeze out private builders, who have no such channels of supply, and able for the same reasons to maintain a commanding position over public works assignments and acquisition of more materials. (In a company recently formed to exploit the mineral resources of the Negev, the government has a 51 per cent interest, Solel Boneh 49 per cent.)

By virtue of their size, if nothing else, Histadrut enterprises are also the natural major beneficiaries of external aid, such as the American Export-Import Bank loans. Furthermore, private enterprise is mainly dependent on government allocation of foreign exchange; but Histadrut has its own sources of hard currency abroad. There is a rich field of short and long-term credits for Histadrut in Ampal (American-Palestine Trading Corporation), relatively few of whose bourgeois shareholders realize or seem troubled by the paradox in their support of "socialist" institutions.

In addition, there are the worldwide philanthropic campaigns of Histadrut, which afford a further competitive advantage, it is asserted, since a Histadrut firm, if it does not pay its own way and show a profit, can still get along on cash contributions from abroad, a crutch on which private enterprise obviously cannot lean. Even where a private concern has been able to stand its ground competitively it has sometimes had to surrender itself to a purchasing bid from the colossus (as in the case, quite recently, of the Mandelblitt building firm or, in the pre-Israel period, the Nesher cement works).

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SECONDLY, according to the critics, intimate ties with government give Histadrut the advantage in the hustle for scarce licenses, permits, and other official plums. In the present cabinet, seven of the thirteen ministers, including Ben Gurion, are members of Histadrut. Critics concede that, in varying degrees, these men have from time to time made decisions contrary to Histadrut's particular interests. Notable examples are the licensing of two large private projects for paper and tire factories in preference to similar Histradrut-backed proposals. But in the Mapai-dominated ministries, the middle and lower echelons are packed with trade unionists who, it is said, function automatically in support of Histadrut. And it is with these echelons that the day-to-day power resides.

Private entrepreneurs are allegedly forced to accept in meager allocation, or buy on the black market, commodities which the administration distributes liberally to cooperatives —and which have now and then found their way from there into the same black market. One Histadrut affiliate suddenly received a monopoly on purchase of farm products from Arab villages in the Galilee, and private buyers were barred by army guards. On another occasion, without public auction the Abandoned Property Custodian sold to Histadrut's Hamashbir, reportedly well below market price, valuable machines of a former Arab spinning works; private companies who applied previously to buy the equipment had been advised by the custodian that the machines were reserved for use in the Negev and were not for sale to the private sector. Hamashbir also received an exclusive license —and adequate allocation of cloth—to sell winter underwear and other apparel in the immigrant work camps. This froze out 92 private factories, who were instructed by the government to turn over their stocks to the Histadrut agency for sale in the camps. (After violent outcry from the competition, Hamashbir's "concession" was reduced from all of the 50 camps to 21 of them, the others to be supplied by the free market.)

In recent months Solel Boneh has been allocated over half of the country's cement, the Jewish Agency 15 per cent, Hamashbir 13 per cent, the army 12 per cent, and private contractors only 8 per cent, it is estimated. Of its share, allocated mainly for immigrant housing, Solel Boneh has been assertedly using two-thirds for Mapai clubs, official Histadrut buildings, and lucrative private orders, and only one-third for the immigrants—while blaming the inadequacy of its work for immigrants on the shortage of cement! Not content with its squeeze on local cement sources, Solel Boneh has also been absorbing the major share of imported cement, forcing private contractors to a near standstill. And although the Israeli government is officially treating Western Germany almost as if Adolf Hitler were still personally in power, it is common talk among insiders that Solel Boneh—along with the Jewish Agency—is allowed to do heavy importing from the German market with credits created by settlement of certain restitution claims.

It is noteworthy, too, that until this March kibbutzim had been exempt from income tax, even though many of them operated plants competing squarely with private industry, which had always been taxed stiffly. (Revenue for the Treasury from this hitherto untapped source is conservatively anticipated at over one million Israeli pounds.)

HISTADRUT, the criticism continues, injures the interests of the total Israeli community by provoking a deep resentment in the private branch of the economy—a resentment which eventually communicates itself to foreign private investors and diminishes their zeal for making the investments which the country sorely needs.

The foreign businessman naturally seeks out his local counterpart. He wants to know how business is done, the conditions, the problems, the prospects. Inevitably, the answers he gets make him stop and think (even after adequately discounting the possible prejudice in his Israeli colleague's views). The Law for the Encouragement of Capital Investments—and later administrative improvements—give him special privileges over long-established firms, such as reduced taxes and firm assurances of the licenses and allocations essential for continued production. But, he asks himself, for how long? Sooner or later, he reckons, he will cease being a *new* investor in Israel and become an *old* one. He sees himself today as the foreign investor being wooed, tomorrow the private businessman being pushed around.

But the investor does not have to rely en-

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tirely on Israeli complaints. He often, in very short order, acquires complaints of his own.

He is familiar with the evils of political "pull" back home, but in Israel—a very small country—the all-pervading Histadrut seems to stand out much more formidably. He is not officially told in so many words that, if he wants to be sure of his workers' cooperation or of an easy time in government bureaus, he would be wise to get himself a Histadrut partner; nor is he bluntly warned that an independent private company may suddenly find a brand new Histadrut-supported outfit arising to compete with it—backed by Histadrut's semi-philanthropic financial reserves. But he absorbs enough hints to make him acutely aware of the possibilities. And if he does negotiate with Histadrut, he invariably discovers that Histadrut will enter the project in exchange for a 50 per cent participation, and no less. He may then pack up and leave rather than accept.

The regime has several times challenged its critics to produce evidence of a single instance where the government tried to bully a private investor into association with Histadrut. To this the critics reply that the frustrated investor, being essentially pro-Israel no matter how deep his personal resentment, is not likely to issue any public blast against Zion. But, they say, the smoke is so thick there must be a fire somewhere. They cite the reliable story of an American concrete-block maker who could not get a guarantee of cement supply from Solel Boneh unless he tied up with a kibbutz. Instead of yielding, he returned home. So did an American investor who wanted to build a motion picture theater but had no assurances he would find film operators if he did not accept as partners several Histadrutniks who knew nothing about the cinema business. A leading Jewish businessman in Mexico, who headed a five-man delegation claiming to represent nearly 20 million dollars in eager Jewish capital from that country, has declared that the Israeli government turned him down flatly when he offered to launch an insurance company, a deposit bank, and other similar financial projects.

Is it not significant, the critics will ask, that in the approved enterprises involving Histadrut and private capital which have cleared the Investment Center, Histadrut rarely takes less than 50 per cent? (One outstanding exception is Hamashbir's small-scale participation in a nitrogenous fertilizer and chemicals company—but this field has always been predominantly in the private sector.) And why is it that in a Histadrut area like cement, a desperately short commodity with presumably large potential profits, or like bus transportation, where expansion could profit the country considerably, no new private firm has emerged at all?

AGAINST these allegations, Histadrut supporters enter an equally uncompromising denial of nearly all particulars, embellished by the general observation that the real trouble is merely private enterprise's lack of enterprise.

In the first place, they say, there is nothing basically backward or unbusinesslike about Histadrut and its leadership to make them inadequate to the challenge of Israel's current economic needs. Indeed, organizations like Solel Boneh are not even "cooperatives" in the sense of kibbutzim or other classically simple cooperatives of the pioneering era. Solel Boneh and the other large Histadrut enterprises were never intended to belong to the individual workers or members but to the collectivity of workers. The real purpose was and is to serve as independent contracting agencies devoted to the welfare of the general economy. If anything, they might be called "super-cooperatives"—all the more useful to the state because of their size and wide range of operations. As such, it is maintained, they are especially well suited to Israel's present needs because they are in a position to employ all their skill and resources for the broad advancement of the national interest rather than merely for profit.

Nor is there any basis to the charge, say Histadrut's defenders, that bigness gives it easier credit or other advantages. The industrial segment of the Export-Import loan is being used in substantial part by eligible private firms. In the agricultural segment, too, credits have gone to private groups in proportion to their activity, if not more—notably in citrus and fertilizers. Philanthropic funds raised by Histadrut abroad are employed, not to plug deficits caused by mismanagement, but as additional investments or to build schools, youth villages, clinics, and other social utilities which in no way compete with private

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enterprise. And if Ampal can raise more money among Americans for its "cooperative" projects than the Palestine Economic Corporation can raise among the same investors for private projects, might it not perhaps be simply because Histadrut and Ampal have more imagination and energy in the creation and promotion of enterprises?

Neither Histadrut nor private firms, the defense insists, can obtain a license for anything licensable unless the application for it is justified in the general economic interest. There is, for instance, no present distinction between Solel Boneh and any independent builder in the allocation of cement: priority is assigned rather to the type of building project, with immigrant housing at the top of the list and luxury apartments at the bottom. Further, no factory or firm anywhere in Israel seems to be going bankrupt, and no decline of private industry can be reported. On the contrary, plenty of private firms, by using good business methods, are positively thriving. Histadrutniks suggest that much of the bitterness over licenses and allocations is due solely to the shortages in Israel of pretty nearly everything: when a businessman knows he could do ten times his actual volume of business if only he had the supplies, it is natural for him to suspect discrimination and start shouting for help.

Moderate pleaders will concede that there have been occasional preferments for Histadrut and that officials at various levels sometimes go astray because of personal allegiances. But government policy calls for equal treatment of the cooperative and private sector—and when a violation is exposed it is corrected. Histadrut itself is constantly alert, its friends declare, to internal error. They cite as an instance of effective self-reform the case of Egged, the transport cooperative, which was compelled by Histadrut to cease employing garage labor, a violation of principle, and set up a separate service cooperative for the mechanics.

Passing to the counter-offensive, pro-Histadrut circles charge that private investors conjure up the cooperative bogey as a cloak over their own reluctance to take chances in Israel. If private enterprise believes in free competition, why does it fear the competition of Histadrut? Why does it demand the virtual reorganization of the whole Israeli economy as its price for participation? If Histadrut has the capital, resources, and know-how to make good its share, why shouldn't it be permitted to have 50 per cent of any joint operation with private enterprise? Would the balance be any fairer if private capital secured 51 per cent?

And if Histadrut sinks more money each year into Israel's future than private foreign investors do, is that a fault in Histadrut? Should Histadrut be condemned for its confidence in investment? Instead of calculating potential profits down to the last decimal and staying aloof unless profits are absolutely guaranteed, let private enterprise sometimes take the risks that Histadrut often takes, operating on shoestrings, hunches, and faith.

Such, in outline, is the brief presented for Histadrut. Some outside observers regard the case as persuasive, others as evasive. It may be relevant to note that, in Israel, the critics of Histadrut are not limited to opponents of the administration. Not long ago the Mapai Youth weekly, *Asmoret*, in a mixture of self-analysis and pert criticism of its elders, openly admitted unfair treatment of private enterprise, and cited: refusal to license a soap factory unless management formed a cooperative with persons lacking knowledge of the business; refusal to license certain private imports at a good low price unless half of the cargo went to Hamashbir at cost; the case of persons holding party cards who can "enter government offices freely ahead of long queues." Mapai's own non-socialist allies, when the four-party government coalition was still a working partnership, strenuously urged an end of alleged partiality toward Histadrut. A member of the pro-government Sephardic group in the Knesset publicly denounced "the system of controls tending to destroy private enterprise by canalizing all trade into the hands of Histadrut." As for the non-socialist opposition, it has long been clamoring for an anti-trust law frankly designed to break Histadrut's grip. And the liberal General Zionist chairman of a parliamentary committee to investigate alleged discrimination against private enterprise has accused the government of obstructing the committee's work. (Certainly, defenders of Israeli institutions might insert parenthetically, there is no control, or sign of it, on criticism of government and

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Histadrut sins and omissions, real or imagined.)

Now it is not necessary for this reporter to make a categoric judgment on the merits of the Histadrut case. This article's purpose is to expose to general public attention a basic problem which hitherto has been treated gingerly or overlooked entirely in objective American public discussion. Sooner or later that problem must be soberly confronted if Israel is to become a flourishing market for private foreign investment.

The first prerequisite will be clarification of the facts. Government spokesmen insist that the tumult against Histadrut in the Knesset is politically motivated and biased. This is often true—for both sides—in controversial issues. It would seem, however, that the government and Histadrut ought effectively to provide the facts and the figures to refute the allegations. If the Histadrut case is a strong one, the public—especially the Israeli public—should be persuaded by evidence rather than by turgid rhetoric or appeals to emotional Jewish "patriotism" and faith in miracles which are the traditional and outmoded methods of communication between Israeli leaders and world Jewry. There appears to be, at the very least, a grave ineptitude in Israeli public relations on the question of Histadrut. Entirely apart from whether the charges against Histadrut are really true, there is not the slightest doubt that too many of the potential foreign investors in Israel, and most of the established private entrepreneurs in Israel, *believe* that the charges are true. It follows, I think, that the government of Israel must do two things: devise ways of encouraging investors to venture into Israel despite their misgivings; and devise ways of demonstrating beyond all possible doubt that Israel, not Histadrut, is the supreme end of governmental economic policy.

ADDED ATTRACTIONS FOR PRIVATE ENTERPRISE: We have previously noted, in addition to the existence of a labor Goliath in the Israeli economy, other deterrents to fresh risk capital. To soften the impact of this list of impediments, the Israeli government has offered substantial concessions. But results, in terms of volume of investment, have fallen far below the needs. What more can be done?

Some suggest going further with concessions in taxes. But taxes during the first five, seven, or ten years have already been cut to the bone for the new approved enterprises, and reduction would generally only mean turning over the difference saved to the investor's own government. And how could the existing favorable tax rates be well extended beyond their present term? This would give new investors a permanent advantage over old investors, even when the former had ceased to be "new." And to give *all* enterprises the same long-term concessions would deal a severe blow to the Israel Treasury.

There is another possible concession, however, which qualified observers regard as workable and desirable. This would be to raise the percentage each investor is permitted to get back on his capital annually in dollars or in any other hard currency he originally invested. Right now he is allowed 10 per cent by law. It has been announced that investors who really earn a solid amount of foreign exchange for Israel will be permitted a higher rate—but the rate has not been specified, no example of it has been disclosed, and it has failed to produce any substantial investment increase.

Opponents of a more generous arrangement say that Israel could not afford to permit more dollars out. But why not, if the offer of better terms will attract more foreign-exchange earners and there is a net gain in dollars left in Israel? Ten per cent—not in profit but merely in annual recovery of capital—is hardly a bonanza lure. If the investor were simply to sink his money into gilt-edge American securities or a new American enterprise which he could operate familiarly on his home grounds, the minimum return he could expect would be six per cent profit. An extra 4 per cent in Israel just of a man's own capital is scarcely opulent in return for all the hazards of a foreign venture. There would seem to be no risk whatever in raising the rate to some higher percentage—provided that the repatriated dollars above 10 per cent of the original investment do not exceed, say, 40 per cent of the dollars actually earned for Israel before repatriation. In this way Israel would always have the dollars with which to pay off the investor—and come out ahead. There is no great likelihood, in any event, that many businesses will do very much bet-

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ter than 10 per cent. And any that did would probably be inclined to plough a good slice of the profit back into the enterprise again. But why not proclaim the investor's *right* to take it out if he wishes to?

IDEALLY, there is another suggestion which might work wonders psychologically for the morale of reluctant investors.

Suppose the regime were to admit frankly that all its efforts to attract investment have fallen short. Suppose it were to indicate that Trade Minister Geri has been held back by a lack of real authority or real conviction that he could make fundamental changes. Suppose somebody new—someone with international reputation, liberal background, proved devotion to Israel, and high personal achievement in private enterprise—were to be given a competent staff (partly imported) and wide powers to make Israel attractive for investors. The effect might be sensational—and the results could be most happy for Israel's solvency.

Sober controls—and an emphasis on large units of production moderately centralized in planning—would of course continue to be necessary. Even if its alleged political influence were reduced, the very real utility and strategic economic position of Histadrut would be a powerful brake on irrational, piecemeal exploitation of the country. There is an extensive middle ground, however, between the present system and irresponsible individualism. In that middle ground the development in Israel of a healthy, viable economy along Western lines might very well be charted.

The new direction need not lie in the narrow groove of private profit. After all, the essence of Western economic genius is not so much profit as production. If American economic potential has grown monumentally huge, it is because the American businessman has developed skills for making goods rather than merely for making money. He seems to have captured the secret of producing more things faster than anyone else and delivering them on time, with minimum waste of material. He has achieved this production know-how in an atmosphere of moderate freedom and adequate competition. Israel, within the limitations of her size, could strive for comparable results in a liberalized economy.

But is it likely that such a transformation will be permitted to occur under existing political circumstances?

Mapai government leaders have shown remarkable courage and flexibility. It is no mean achievement for them to have come out in favor of *hiring* immigrants to work in kibbutzim (which challenges the basic communal concept of "non-exploitation of labor"); in favor of *selling* some public land (which challenges the basic Zionist concept of land as a national heritage); in favor of taxes on cooperative settlements; in favor of a wage ceiling; in favor, finally, of any concession by a socialist-minded government to the traditional hobgoblin of the workers' state, private enterprise.

All this has been done because Mapai leadership has understood the need for adapting theory to fact. Ben Gurion has proclaimed that without investments "the state will perish." Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett has warned that "the ground is burning under our feet" and that private enterprise must be "a central pillar" of Israeli economy. Finance Minister Eliezer Kaplan has repeatedly affirmed similar convictions. But do not these men, people ask, still to a large extent have their hands tied by an unseasoned electorate and the traditions of powerful institutions which have placed them in office?

FOR THE Mapai leadership to move forward resolutely toward a retreat from dogma, there must first be a recognition in the Mapai-Histadrut middle echelons and rank and file of certain ideologically and politically unpalatable facts: that it may be better for Israel, in the present emergency, to have the base of her economy more firmly anchored on competition, individual initiative, and private investment; that the urgent problem of Zionist pioneering today is no longer so much the financially unprofitable clearing of wilderness and desert by collective sweat and sacrifice, which was the historic mission of the labor pioneer, the *halutz*, as it is the creation of a briskly expanding society capable of absorbing and employing the immigration, which is primarily the task of capital, technical skills, and individual imagination; that the gains of social democracy are not necessarily jeopardized by the strengthening of private enterprise, and that

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the concentration of economic and political influence in the hands of a few labor-capitalist officials is no guarantee of social democracy either.

But such a wholesale rejection of lifelong precepts is too fundamental to be expected tomorrow. At the same time, there are grounds for the hope that a tolerable live-and-let-live compromise may come by action not of the Histadrut directorate but of the mass of the voters. The Jew in Israel—like the Jew everywhere else, particularly the Jew of European origins—is essentially an individualist, with little stomach for a collective diet. The zeal of his flight from Soviet-controlled areas when physically possible—as shown in the statistics of emigration from behind the Iron Curtain—testify to this prejudice in favor of personal initiative; and, having tasted the bitter fruits of Soviet collectivism, he is not slow to throw his influence in the direction of less regimented economic forms. The recent rise of General Zionism from near obscurity to the status of second largest party in the municipalities of Israel is further evidence of a growing resistance to excessive controls and "cooperative" paternalism. The coming national elections might underline this trend. Mapai-Histadrut may have to accommodate themselves to the changing times. It is quite possible that in the next elected parliament of Israel the socialist Mapai and the capitalist General Zionist parties will join in a working coalition.

The General Zionist chiefs in Israel are perhaps not a match for the top Mapai leaders in vigor and flair—possibly because the moderates have had less opportunity to develop such qualities in commanding positions. But if they get enough votes, they will certainly discover a new resonance in their own voices, and the various levels of Mapai—high, middle, and low—will have to listen.

At any rate, there is one satisfaction which all friends of Israel can amicably share. Jews abroad—and especially in the United States—are steadily becoming less prone to confuse a particular regime or institution inside Israel with Israel herself. Inside Israel there never was this confusion. The Israelis always distinguished forcefully between the national welfare and the welfare of any party, faction, or sect. Not so abroad, where for a long time Zionist Jewry labored under the delusion that criticism of anything in Israel was a stab in the back of the entire community. This attitude produced a whole menagerie of sacred cows.

Happily, however, world Jewish opinion has been maturing. Straight information is increasingly more welcome, constructive criticism no longer equated with "treason." This writer, for example, does not expect to be denounced in New York or Beersheba for having tried to set down here the views of competent analysts whose frank opinions, until recently, would have been quite taboo in circles friendly to Israel. Such growing tolerance of candor is an asset in the enlightenment of American Jewry on the practical short-range and long-range difficulties of the struggling state. And, since the enlightened opinions of American Jewry are still of interest in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, the new tolerance will also be an asset for Israel.

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FLECKER: THE POET AND HIS EAST

"Shall I Never Be Home . . .?"

HERBERT HOWARTH

PROBABLY, as the phase of revaluation of the work of the first decade of this century comes round, James Elroy Flecker's rating will rise and he will be seen more clearly along with contemporaries of his like Rupert Brooke. Whatever the final estimate of his poetry may be, it has its own compelling idiom: it has always had its devotees, and one or or two of his poems have steadily held their places in the popular anthologies throughout the more than thirty-five years since his death. As a figure he has special interest for those who would gain insight into the inner problems of a man born of a mixed marriage, in whom two strains meet and seek for a common purpose.

Flecker was born in London in 1884, the son of an English Christian clergyman and a Jewish mother. He grew up in Gloucestershire on the Cotswold Hills, had the routine English upper-class schooling at Uppingham, followed by Oxford. His university career was not academically distinguished, but he made a mark as a poet, a dandy with a genius for the higher kind of bawdy, and a person of independent ideas. For a time he felt he would like to know the working people—it was the era of the Fabians, and Rupert Brooke at Cambridge was thinking along similar lines—and he would nostalgically haunt the drabber parts of London, and he devoted one long vacation to tramping the Bordeaux district of France, drawn there by a rising of the vineyard workers. In his first play, *Don Juan*, which earned praise from Bernard Shaw, he oddly mixed a craving for the betterment of the industrial poor, an ardor for Britain and the Empire, and a passion for romantic love and magic. "The worst scene," Shaw wrote to him about it, "is the argument of Don Juan with the labor leader, which is not knowledgeable." And then—"You had better go on making a fool of yourself for ten years or so and see what will come of it."

Actually Flecker had less than four years of life left. In these he found, as his travels had taught him, that his best creative source was the eastern Mediterranean. He had spent two years at Cambridge preparing himself for the Levant consular service; and so out to Turkey and Syria. The writing of poetry had always been easy to him, but too easy. During his spell in Syria he sometimes succeeded in breaking free of glibness and finding new heights and depths. He produced there a number of lyrics, and one superbly wrought play, *Hassan*, based on a story from the *Arabian Nights*. Then he began to succumb to a chronic tuberculosis. Early in 1915 he died in a sanatorium in Switzerland. So much for the external facts of his life.

FLECKER and his generation grew up in the shadow of the work of the great archetype of Victorian romanticism, Sir Richard Burton, today best remembered for the most full-blooded translation of the *Arabian Nights*, but in his own time renowned for his spectacular journeys in the Orient and Africa, for his prolific writing about them, and in particular for his *Kasidah*, a poem of

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THE work of James Elroy Flecker, who died in 1915 at the age of thirty-one, represents a remarkable fusion of the British culture in the early years of this century with Orientalism, which in turn was stimulated and influenced subtly by the poet's Jewish strain. HERBERT HOWARTH, who here analyzes the poetry of this British writer too little known in this country, is a young English poet who served with the British administration in Palestine from 1943 to 1945, when he resigned in protest against his government's policy. Mr. Howarth was born in Blackpool, England, in 1917. His most recent contribution to COMMENTARY was "Israel's Modern Poetry" (August 1950).

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Arab life. At the beginning of the 19th century English poets had to go no further than the Mediterranean where it touched France, Corsica, and Italy, to find color and nationalism and primitive vigor sufficient to activate their powers. Fifty or sixty years later the world was smaller, and Europe more homogeneous, or at any rate more familiar; the imagination had to range further to make contact with the exotic. Laurence Oliphant wandered the world and spent the close of his life largely in the Near East; Fitzgerald hammered out, almost without knowing what he did, his quatrains paraphrasing the Persian Omar Khayyam; Doughty was trekking the desert, and he completed *Arabia Deserta* in the year of Flecker's birth; Wilfred Blunt, growing interested in the people of Egypt, had begun his heroic single-handed contest against Lord Cromer, the British Resident in Cairo. The 20th-century names are as well known: those who found their arena in the Near East, like T. E. Lawrence and Gertrude Bell and Flecker, and those who had to go further, to India and China, like E. M. Forster and Arthur Waley.

What turned them all East? T. E. Lawrence claimed that in boyhood he read *By the Waters of Babylon,* and that made him dream of restoring to life a great dead empire of the Near East. Flecker while still a boy came across Burton's *Kasidah* and transcribed it whole. One is tempted to say that in neither of these cases could the reading have *planted* the ideas that grew from them, but that rather it awakened deep congenital impulses. For certainly, what happened to the Englishmen who went out to the Orient was that they made their chosen regions a focal point for solving their deepest and most personal problems.

Lawrence projected on to Arabia all the opposing Napoleonism and nihilism, the ambition and the despair, of his being. Flecker brought to Syria a no less disruptive complex of dualities. Like Burton, he was peculiarly responsive to the Orient and its fascination, and peculiarly and painfully aware of its evils. T. E. Lawrence, having made himself master of the contours of the desert and the structure of Syrian castles and the nomad Arab mind, could brood most profoundly on the gardens and moat of an old English cathedral town, and for his favorite music choose the "ghost-harmonies" of the essentially English Elgar. A similar tug between place of birth and place of choice characterizes Flecker. In his poem "Oak and Olive," beginning "I was born a Londoner and bred in Gloucestershire," he goes on to tell how the scenes of London and the Cotswolds all were transformed by the mind's eye, as he walked among them, to scenes of the longed-for Aegean:

Have I not chased the fluting Pan
Through Cranham's sober trees?
Have I not sat on Painswick Hill
With a nymph upon my knees,
And she as rosy as the dawn,
And naked as the breeze?

But then, he tells, as soon as he is actually in Greece, his thoughts alter every scene to the shape of the England he has left:

But when I walk in Athens town
That swims in dust and sun
Perverse, I think of London then
Where massive work is done,
And with what sweep at Westminster
The rayless waters run.

With such a sentiment uppermost in his feeling, Flecker seems to be saying that no place possesses the quality of "here," but everywhere tends to become "elsewhere." T. E. Lawrence was in such a plight, too, but he had several loopholes into reality, made available by his pleasure in practical problems, by his interest in machinery, and so forth. Flecker had few such loopholes, and thus was more at the mercy of the opposing pulls. Just as he oscillated between England and the Orient, unfree to be happy in either because the other always preoccupied him, so he was torn between reality and dream: and between a concern, dictated by conscience, with the poor and the drab, and an appetite for the exotic and rich.

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FLECKER'S interest in the East may have been parallel with that of other Englishmen of his generation, but there were also some sharp differences. Most Englishmen who practiced the romantic cult of the Orient asked: "Where can I find vitality? Where will my energies be spurred and my dreams find scope to be lived?" Flecker at least once claimed that this was the shape of his question too: in the first section of his poem "Ideal," there's a dialogue between the poet and an old man who, though only half-drawn, is a queer and disturbing image of skepticism. The poet sings of the nobility of life. The old man mocks him and points to the degeneracy of the city people moving around them. The poet answers that whatever is wrong with London, where folk have "hearts of stone," there are other climates where greatness may yet flourish:

Said I: "In London fades the flower
But far away the bright blue skies
Shall watch my solemn walls arise,
And all the glory, all the grace
Of earth shall gather there, and eyes
Shall shine like stars in that new place. . . ."

But the old man, answering him again, and with an ambivalent comment, puts a different light on the matter, and marks Flecker off from other Orientalizing Englishmen:

Said he: "Indeed of ancient race
Thou comest, with thy hollow scheme."

In a way typical of the working of poetry and of the honesty it forces on the poet even when he seems bent on striking a pose, this turn aptly shows the special difficulties facing Flecker. In his case, we see that this young poet's search for a new animating realm involves quite separate personal issues. The translation of his question is no longer merely "Where vitality?" but also, and first of all, "Who am I? Where do I truly belong?"

Before a man can escape he must at least first know where he is trying to escape from. (The man who is torn between two worlds is often trying to escape from both of them, yet all his contortions only carry him backwards and forwards along the groove between.)

Soon after his arrival at Oxford, the poet had taken a step the very triviality of which indicates how much the matter of self-identification was worrying him. Herman Elroy Flecker was his registered name. To be more English he decided to drop Herman and become James. He retained Elroy. Why? There are three possible reasons. He was called "Roy" at home, and could not abandon it. He knew that his mother had wished him to have a Hebrew name (*El roï*: "a God of seeing"), and he would not forsake the one she had chosen. By false etymology he associated it with kingliness. Any or all these thoughts may have decided him. In any case he felt, in a rather primitive way, that his name was important, and must be an expression of himself. By pairing James and Elroy he declared himself simultaneously a modern Westerner and a personality linked with the East and the past.

When he looked into the history of his father's family he found a link with the East even there. The Reverend Flecker's father had been a schoolmaster for a time in Constantinople. A part of the past was sympathetic to the enlightening mission of the teacher; and significantly enough, when he himself reached Constantinople he published *The Grecians*, a study of the principles of education in the form of a modern Platonic dialogue. But in his university period, when he was so nervously and urgently trying to discover himself, he wanted to find somewhere in his family history a more direct contact with a much deeper past, and if possible a contact that would justify his conviction that he was "an aristocrat by nature." Inevitably he now looked to his mother's side of the family. I once asked Arthur Waley, who had been a friend of his, whether he thought Flecker had been influenced by Jewish memories reaching him through his mother. Mr. Waley replied, "A good deal more than that. After all, he himself looked strikingly Oriental and I think this, as much as anything, made him feel he did not belong here. He

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had a short phase of interest in his mother's ancestors and made up his mind that she was descended from some kind of Maccabean chief or irredentist. . . ."

It is strikingly appropriate to the English poetic tradition that when Flecker at last locates his kingly origins, he places them in a context that is also revolutionary. Associating himself with militant leaders of the past, the English writer often thus lays bare his secret hope that destiny intends him for militant leadership in the future. "I was the true, the grand idealist," Flecker cried in the person of Don Juan:

Noble on earth, all but a King in Hell,
I am Don Juan with a tale to tell.

Don Juan is, in some of its unequal parts, a study in his own identity. It has one luminous and crucial scene pivoting on the idea that a man must be interpreted through his maternal ancestors. The Leporello of the play is a South Welshman, Owen Jones, and at the psychological climax he changes from a cringing valet to an agent of magical compulsion, dominating his master and enforcing on him the memory of the procession of the ages: "Who was your mother, O my master? She was some mighty Jewess, I dare say, robed in a leopard's skin, who knew the deep secrets of Persia and wrote them in a book." Again the paradox operates that, by facing inwards on himself and groping about his memories for all that is most *alien* in him, he becomes powerfully associated with a major *English* tradition—the tradition of *faery,* in which the primitive and the magical are apprehended in terms that movingly mix good and evil. So with Melville's Captain Ahab; so with Mr. Kurtz in Conrad; so in Malory's chapter—a chapter that often recurred to the imagination of T. E. Lawrence—when Lancelot begat the world's purest knight on a woman who came secretly to his bed. To know himself Flecker had to dare to peer into clefts of the past and see there the ancient ambiguous symbols; and he had to go to the East in order to be confronted by the landscape of old past-haunted caves and clefts, like the Dravidian cave in Forster's *Passage to India.*

In an essay on pleasures denied to the complacent, Flecker tells how the imagination can be activated by the scenery of Asia, when the past—formidable, dark, pregnant—is glimpsed suddenly there: "He might have walked beneath heavy Indian skies and understood in a flash, standing in the monstrous shadow of an ancient god, the secret of all Empires." T. E. Lawrence knew these apocalyptic moments; they came to him in childhood at Oxford, and when his expeditions to the desert began they came, as one night among the diggings at Carchemish when a storm lit up the figure of a colossal god. To Lawrence they came as a spur to action, and at the same time as the eternal criticism of all action. To Flecker they were rather his marrow, his innards, his dreams, his kingdom, awakening all he had forgotten in himself. The power that Walter Pater found in Mona Lisa, and that D. H. Lawrence wanted to see in the Etruscans and Aztecs, the power that it is sometimes supposed might be available in a primitive integration of good and evil, this Flecker was at moments on the point of seizing from the memory of his mother's ancestors.

"What if the Jews are an older race than we and know old forgotten secrets?" he makes Hassan meditate. The momentary flashes of intuition answered his question "Who am I?" by lighting up the Asiatic side of himself; by accepting that answer he was to write his best poetry; yet he could never accept it permanently and wholeheartedly, and the more he learned of either side of himself, the more passionately he was inclined to cling to the other.

Writers whose intuitive life is lived in one tradition but who are also molded in another tradition by the language they use are not infrequent. Considerable contributions to English literature have been made by them: by such Irishmen as Yeats, or by a Pole like Conrad. Sometimes great sticklers for the "correct" and the formal, yet they impose their difference on the old forms or on

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the fashions in vogue among their contemporaries, and bring a special originality into their work. Flecker can be counted with these. He gave a new flavor to English. Some readers find it over-sweet; all admit it to be singular. He made a unique literary success out of the current vogue of traveling East to escape the pressure of personal problems. But in his case this escape to the Orient had a special exquisite value: it provided the cleverest of all evasions, the surest of all escapes from oneself. Flecker took a leap right into the area of his ancestral origins, the last place any man would be expected to use as a hide-out from his ancestry.

It must have been clear to the critic in him—he was a good critic of poetry, and his early critical essays still make tolerable reading—that such verse as he had written in a professedly British and patriotic vein showed his differences from England rather than his likenesses. They were over-British. They had, for instance, none of the odd ironies of Kipling, with whom he would have liked to compare himself. T. E. Lawrence describes him as "furiously British: a patriotic 'God Save the King' exile, nostalgic, and knowing himself landless, clinging desperately to fiction," and tells how he tried to transcribe this into life by knocking a German down in the Deutscherhof Pension in Beyrouth. These pugnacious exertions might succeed in life, but not in poetry, and it is not surprising that when Flecker realized this he turned to the diametrically opposite maneuver of overtly exploiting his Oriental side in order to dissimulate it. To a man in love with his own gifts and his own dexterity, as he frankly was, this must have been highly gratifying: to adopt a fashion; to use it as an escape from himself through himself; to be the excelling master of it; and so, secretly, to find himself even while he escaped.

Flecker's writing did in fact become masculine, rounded, truly original only when he reached the Orient and started to exploit the local forms, scenery, traditions. After two or three years he was able to say that he had created the best Oriental poems in the English language, and that he could, at call, improve on Fitzgerald's "Omar Khayyam." He really understood the Aegean and the Fertile Crescent, he claimed, and the best judges admitted his claim. Natural linguist he was (T. E. Lawrence stated that he knew all the great Old World cultures except Russian, and actually he had some interest in Russian too), but his understanding of the Arabs went further than their language. The secrets of Turkish and Arabic poetry were in his grasp. He found the right, provoking English names for the sensuous data of his region:

Take to Aleppo filigrane,
and take them paste of apricots,
And coffee tables botched with pearl,
and little beaten brassware pots:
And thou shalt sell thy wares for thrice
The Damascene retailers' price,
And buy a fat Armenian slave
Who smelleth odorous and nice. . . .

To these sensuous catalogues he added the strange moral echoes, legacies of the problems of the deserts and the desert religions, which give depth to Arabic poetry. And to this in turn he added a living critique of the eulogistic tradition of the Arabs, showing how when a great poet worked in it he had no option but to accept its distasteful duties, yet continued, watching for the moments when he could suddenly insert truth in it. The output in which Flecker actually does all this is not voluminous, but it is sufficient to show that the "bright blue skies" to which he had come from gray England were as vital as he had hoped.

What was this "flair" that delivered the Orient into his grasp? Was it not the act of recognition of his own identity, made possible, as he had foreseen, by contact with an ancestral landscape? From the moment when this contact was made in 1910 he burned feverishly through a series of conflicting reactions. His tuberculosis was re-awakened, and he had to go home for a spell of treatment, but he came back again, and again the tuberculosis and the poetry advanced rapidly abreast of each other.

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Love of the Orient; hatred of the Orient; poetry of the Orient; illness demanding a withdrawal from the Orient: these four factors collide, struggle, obtain momentary fusion in Flecker in the short period between 1910 and his retirement to a Swiss sanatorium in 1914. His writing often failed even amid this internal excitement; and it was of the sort that when it was not good was atrocious. But in a few things, notably in the play *Hassan,* he worked at a level of perfection. In doing so he also came close to resolving his disparate trends, the split between his feelings for the poor and his love of richness, between a weakness for dreams and a largely compulsive acknowledgment of the claims of reality.

There are two themes in *Hassan*: the story of a humble and profoundly humane confectioner who wins the Caliph's favor by accident and loses it within a day by criticizing tyranny; and the story of the mistake of Pervaneh, when she induces her lover, Rafi, to elect for a joint death with her instead of life apart. Into this second theme, the debate between love and life, Flecker projects something of his lifelong fluctuation between dream and reality.

He had in several earlier poems displayed his conscious fear of death:

O, I'd rather be
A living mouse than dead as a man dies.

By this criterion all real life is worth living; it does not have to approximate impossible dreams to be good. But some of his poems do try to turn life into impossible dreams. One of his own favorites, a paraphrase from the Turkish *Saadabad,* thus pictures the poet enjoying love as the greatest glory in the world.

In the choice confronting Pervaneh and Rafi, Flecker passes judgment on the dream of *Saadabad,* and makes dreams the synonym of death. "I die for love of you," says the ecstatic Pervaneh, but Rafi cries "Comfort me, comfort me! I do not understand thy dreams." This harrowing prison scene rings the death knell of 19th-century romanticism. In choosing love deified and distorted by poetry, the two choose wrong. They should have chosen life with its incomparable realities.

With no less dramatic conviction, in the person of Hassan the poet solved the problem of presenting poor people in poetry for the first and only time. All the efforts to make "songs of the people" in proletarian London or peasant France had failed. Even though he had tried to write ballads claiming "We're of the people, you and I," as long as he was in the West Flecker seemed unable to bear the common people except at a distance. (His friend Douglas Goldring has recorded that when he actually came close to them it was disastrous, as he found one night when, by a chance of Bohemian life, he was at supper with a little Cockney girl called Gertie. He loved to hear himself make dinner conversation, but she repeatedly bludgeoned him into silence with innuendos connecting his swarthiness with neglect of bathing.) Always retaining an affection for his London working-class poems, he republished one or two later on, yet he probably knew they were misfires. The poetry of the industrial tenements could not be written till Eliot came with a new technique, a sense of the appropriate elusive new forms, whereas Flecker's skill lay in the flexible and surprising use of old chant forms.

Now in the Near East Flecker found that these difficulties of making touch with the people vanished. He could go and meet them and listen to them. That was what he had hoped for from the Orient. One of the poems specially scored in his copy of Thalasso's *Anthologie de l'Amour Asiatique* was a Baluchistan "Song of the People." When he toured the Aegean islands with his Athenian wife he heard a peasant tell her, "That man married a siren," pointing out the man. Here were the peasants speaking, and what they said was what he had been long telling himself he wanted to hear. He heard from them "the songs of the people, which are better than mine."

His use of what he heard, then, reaches its best point in *Hassan.* Hassan, the con-

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fectioner, and Ishaq, the Caliph's poet, both spring from the people. When the Caliph admires the beauty of Hassan's common speech, he asks "Where did you learn poetry, Hassan of my heart?" and the answer comes

HASSAN: *In that great school, the Market of Bagdad. . . . All the town of Bagdad is passionate for poetry, O Master. Dost thou not know what great crowds gather to hear the epic of Antari sung in the streets at evening. I have seen cobblers weep and butchers bury their great faces in their hands!*

THE CALIPH: *By Eblis and the powers of Hell, should I not know this, and know that therein lies the secret of the strength of Islam. . . .*

Hassan, like Ishaq, is lifted into the Caliph's favor, and the brief splendor teaches him that a king is rich because a people is poor, that in an empire even culture is only a function of general misery.

Elroy Flecker had long cherished an image of himself as a king-to-be. When he moved from Athens on the last step of his entry into the Levant he had said, "I do a Waring," thinking of Browning's Londoner who left the West and its drabness to rule among waiting primitive peoples:

'So I saw the last
Of Waring?' You! O, never star
Was lost here but shone out afar.
In Vishnu-land what avatar!

But actual experience of the East extinguished his Waring image. To be a king in a society based on the servitude and ignorance of millions, that might be tolerable either to a Waring or a Kurtz, but not to a living Flecker. The king becomes the tyrannical Caliph of Bagdad. Because of the Caliph's ways Ishaq says, "I have broken my lute and will write no more *qasidahs* in praise of the generosity of kings. I will try the barren road, and listen for the voice of the emptiness of the earth."

This is a splendid program that Ishaq announces, but not one easy to carry out. The play ends with the Golden Journey to Samarkand, along a road traveled not by the poor of the earth, but sensuous people who handle sensuous goods:

THE CHIEF DRAPER

Have we not Indian carpets dark as wine,
Turbans and sashes, gowns and bowls and veils,
And broideries of intricate design,
And printed hangings in enormous bales?

THE CHIEF GROCER

We have rose-candy, we have spikenard,
Mastic and terebinth and oil and spice,
And such sweet jams meticulously jarred
As God's Own Prophet eats in Paradise.

In fact there is no successful sequel to Ishaq's decision. The character Hassan is the achievement most nearly related to it. Flecker had planned to make Ishaq—a poet and so a projection of himself—the center of his play. When imagination had done its work, Ishaq, for all his admirable qualities, fell into second place, and in the center revolved the fat, poor, middle-aged, humane confectioner. He is no mere piece of autobiography. He is an invention, full and rounded, with a soul where taste and humanity merge, where what Fletcher loved and what he felt he ought to love are reconciled. Ishaq, like Flecker, makes poems. Hassan, like the ideal common man, is a poem.

AFTER this play, finished in the summer of 1913, a rapid physical disintegration set in and Flecker found he could no further perform Ishaq's promise to try the barren road. It was as though in life he had already made a different, a wrong choice with Pervaneh and Rafi, and had seen his mistake only when he was a ghost blowing on the wind. The pang of doubt in all his exuberance, injected by the difficulties of the question "Where do I belong?" had long made him interested in the "Parnasse" school of French poetry and its wormwood tinctures, so unlike the profuse Arabic literary colors.

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In picturing the lovers' ghosts bleakly evaporating after the execution, Flecker used the palette of the Parnasse with great effectiveness, and was rightly pleased with himself for it. But as he succumbed to illness in his last year, he tended to a wholesale adoption of the Parnassian doctrine, which then began to enfeeble his work.

Once more he turned to dreaming and away from reality. One of his last pieces of writing, a review of Paul Fort's *Vivre en Dieu,* says "The divine function is to dream. . . . All lives dream each other into existence." Against the anemia of some of these last thoughts only two positive indications can be set, a note on Milton as a masculine figure in English poetry, and the idea of a play on Judith; also, just before his thirtieth birthday his fever subsided for a moment and he had his "only mystic vision," an imaginary poem about Jerusalem new and old.

Looking again at the course of his creative life, one feels that there is a sudden sharp rise in it, followed by an equally sudden fall. The rise begins when he goes to live in the Orient. It reaches its upper limit with *Hassan,* and at this point all the problems of his life come together and, interacting dynamically and productively, are within an ace of being resolved and leading to a new phase of work. But that lies just beyond his power. Then the tensions which have been beneficial for an inspired moment become utterly destructive. He sinks and dies. He is never able to follow the kindly, cynical, worldly wisdom of Bernard Shaw, put to him in the letter about *Don Juan:* "Do, for Heaven's sake, remember that there are plenty of geniuses about, and that the real difficulty is to find writers who are sober, honest, and industrious and have been for many years in their last situation."

Like Burton as revealed in the famous *Kasidah,* Flecker found himself, by the test of experience, both lover and hater of the Orient. And unlike Burton and the other Englishmen who made this discovery about themselves, Flecker felt bound to accept a measure of responsibility for what he met in the Orient, since to a part of him these lands were home. Out of this intimate connection with two geographical and cultural extremes came both his creative and physical fevers. Partly he belonged to the East, yet it was hard to agree to belong to a region which was "malignant" in that it weakened the will. The will to what? To live history and accomplish change.

At Candilli on the Bosphorus he watched the ships dim away eastwards down the Black Sea in the evening and retrospected on the armies that had used the junction of the two continents, and wrote how from all this "a light fever distracts the dreamer's body, and his mind longs for some coercive chain, and he begins to understand why men in the East will sit by a fountain from noon to night and let the world roll onward."

He perceived a relationship between the politics and the geography of Asia, and traced to it the prolonged submission during the last centuries to squalor and corruption. And perceiving it he recoiled. "I am a modern civilized man," he cried out. To Catholic friends Flecker wrote that if they were attracted by medievalism they should investigate it in the sordid present of the Near East.

So while his faculties flowered in the Levant, he resented and criticized the stagnant beauties that fertilized him. This man whose stage properties were ornate lattices and friezes—

We shall watch the Sultan's fountains
ripple, rumble, splash and rise
Over terraces of marble,
under the blue balconies,
Leaping through the plaster dragon's
hollow mouth and empty eyes.

—this man was off the stage an apostle of the sanitation and functional architecture of the new West. The places he praised were, for instance, the Berlin of 1905, "where there is, indeed, no taste for art, but, better still, there are no slums." His criterion was the newest of America. "We shall build," he wrote in *The Grecians*—"for comfort and utility, and

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obtain our beauty not from the added ornamentation of an antique style, but from the principles of symmetry and design. Indeed, I imagine we shall build our school after the American manner with iron and reinforced concrete. Of all methods of construction this is the strongest, for the San Francisco earthquake itself could not shake down the slimmest buildings wrought of this material. Therefore we shall build our school with straight and simple harmonious lines; and in doing so we may, perhaps, be advancing into a new architectural style, some day to be reckoned great. . . ."

For the first years of the century this is a live manifesto, indicating Western values of a conspicuously progressive nature. When he yearned from Brumana for England—

Oh shall I never never be home again?
Meadows of England shining in the rain
Spread wide your daisied lawns: your
ramparts green
With briar fortify, with blossom screen
Till my far morning

—his characteristic decision to give the title "home" to the place where he is not living at that moment was probably influenced by a concurrent judgment on the quality of housing and living and leisure standards in the West as compared with the East. His images do somewhat suggest the fronts of smug villas, but included in this vision of the English downs is possibly also le Corbusier's vision, a healthy knitting of nature and town.

Thus at the date when his genius still supported his inner tensions and made literature out of their opposing pulls, there was a constant critical descant, sustained by one song. By a paradox it added the richness of an astringent doubt to his sensuousness, doubled his emotions by coupling each with its obverse, brought form with it. This is true of *Hassan* above all. Describing the play in a letter, Flecker himself adumbrates the point: "It's utterly Oriental externally, but I hope the flash of the little European blood I possess gleams through its seraglio atmosphere from time to time."

The European conscience, which had worried him and sent him wandering round working-class London and peering through windowpanes there, had never been able alone to guarantee him poetry; it had even misled him many times; yet his best work was done when he let it penetrate his elected Eastern material as a corrective antidote.

T. E. Lawrence wrote that with Flecker passed "the sweetest singer" of the pre-war world. That is true, but that is not his significance, for even in his own day sweetness of song was becoming a less prized achievement, and Hardy was showing that infelicity might be an asset to those who had a contemporary message. His significance lay in his treatment of his problems. Lawrence, devoted to the Semitic mind, also said of him: "It is restless, is life, for the man whose blood mates North and South (NW and SE)."

Flecker was restless and he used his restlessness. Repose was not possible to him because illusion was not possible. The other Englishmen who went abroad went to something that was truly different and strange to them, but he went to something that he knew in his blood; and thus he found, more quickly than they did, the things that were wrong, and that urgently needed the attentions of both king and schoolmaster, the poet and the rebel, the Oriental and the Westerner. All these personalities were inherent in him, and had found shadowy, tentative expression in his early writing. To develop them, keep them balanced, integrate their work—that was the aim imposed on him by his crucial contacts with the East. It was perhaps outside any man's strength, but in making the effort, he won his triumph as well as slew himself, and earned the right, which he once claimed in a lyric, to be read by poets a thousand years hence:

Since I can never see your face,
And never shake you by the hand,
I send my soul through time and space
To greet you. You will understand.

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THE BIG TABLE

A Story

HOWARD SINGER

THE Tenenbaums' apartment paralleled ours; the windows faced one another across the U-shaped airshaft, our windows were three feet higher and about ten feet away from theirs. I had an intimate view of their kitchen and living room and a reasonably clear view of their foyer and one bedroom. It was a perfect arrangement for spying, and I had nothing else to do. I had had something called "croupous pneumonia," and then there were "complications"—which in those days were cured by complete rest. My mother moved my bed to the corner window, where I had a view of the street and the airshaft, and piled my books within reach. Two novels a day began to pall, however, and I looked about desperately for something to occupy me. That was how I discovered the Tenenbaums.

Mr. Tenenbaum was a dour little specimen who owned the local grocery store. Some years before, my mother had sent me to the store to buy some eggs. It was early and he had not uncrated the latest shipment. When he walked into the rear of the store to candle the eggs I followed him to watch the process. He curtly ordered me into the front of the store. It was the kind of thing a child remembers and I had disliked him ever since.

Later I noticed that he never made the usual meaningless comments on the weather or business to his customers. He would hand them the eggs or bread without even looking at them. I began to watch him out of boredom, but I soon got a sharp, indefinable pleasure when his brooding, ugly little face relaxed as he ate his supper or read the newspaper. There was, of course, the childishly satisfying feeling of seeing someone without being seen, but there was something else, something very rewarding in watching Mr. Tenenbaum in his own home.

I became, in time, familiar with the other members of the family. There was Normie, a thoughtful, tousle-haired City College student in the throes of his first attack of social consciousness. He bit his nails and read everything he could get his hands on. He frequently became so deeply engrossed in his reading that he had to be spoken to several times before he would look up. Often something he read would excite him and he would insist on imparting it to his mother, who probably never fully understood his sudden bursts of animation. He must have had a real feeling for ideas and issues; anything from a textbook to a newspaper could throw him into a ferment.

Sylvia, the daughter, a year or two older than Normie, worked as a bookkeeper somewhere in the garment district. Apparently she was badly treated there, for she complained incessantly. She spoke of the coarseness of her boss, the terrible crowding of the subways during the rush hours—she was quite frail—and the grinding monotony of her work. She was chronically tired. A whine had entered her voice and it made her sound as if she were always on the verge of tears. Perhaps she was. The fact that she was plain-featured did not improve her disposition.

But my interest soon settled on Mrs. Tenenbaum. Mrs. Tenenbaum was a seasoned-looking, stout little woman. She was extremely patient and she tried very hard

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to be clean. I often saw her scrub a dirty rust spot on the sink until her fingers must have ached. The rust remained, of course, but the grease which had found a haven in the rough surface was banished. The entire flat was like that; she cleaned it often and with vigor, but it was an old house and it had developed to a marked degree the propensity that such houses have for harboring grime. She did her best, but the heavy gray, dingy quality remained. No matter how many lamps were lit, the rooms were dark. There was nothing she could do. There was nothing to be done.

Her concern for neatness did not extend to her person, however. Perhaps she was too exhausted from her constant struggle with the apartment to worry about herself, but it is more probable that she simply didn't think it was important. At any rate she was perpetually bedraggled. The heels of her shoes were so badly worn on the outside that her ankles and legs developed a decided outward inclination. It gave her an odd bowlegged appearance. Her hair, tied in a bun, always had a few loose wisps floating about, and she was forever stroking these back against the bun.

She wore a loose brown sweater, buttoned at the throat but not at the waist, forming an inverted "V." She wore it even during the early summer nights, when it was already just a little too warm to sleep comfortably. She wore it in the kitchen, when all four of the range jets were going full blast and Normie and Mr. Tenenbaum walked about in their undershirts.

She was, on the whole, a kindly, competent, well-intentioned woman, but somewhere inside her there was a sliding door which she would shut against other peoples' wishes if those wishes opposed hers. She simply would do as she had intended to and then confront the objector with a bovine placidity that was infuriating.

IT ALWAYS happened when Normie ate supper. Mrs. Tenenbaum did not expect Normie to wait until Sylvia arrived to eat supper, nor Sylvia to wait for her father. They were much too hungry. She served them as they arrived, and took supper herself with her husband. And every night from my perch only ten feet away, I saw the inevitable sequence.

Normie enters the kitchen, still clutching his newspaper. He sits down in his favorite seat, the one in the corner, facing the window. I can see him quite clearly. He struggles with his newspaper briefly, then finally folds it so that it does not threaten the stability of the ketchup bottle or the water pitcher. He fumbles with the grapefruit. He finishes the grapefruit. Mrs. Tenenbaum removes the grapefruit and places before him a gargantuan bowl of soup. This necessitates a rearrangement of the newspaper. Normie rearranges the newspaper, and slowly makes inroads on the oceanic soup bowl. He is absorbed in the paper, and is obviously unaware of the soup. He finishes the soup. Mrs. Tenenbaum removes the soup, and places before him a dish. It is not an ordinary dish. It is a cornucopia from which spill untold kernels of corn, mountains of green peas, huge gray boulders of *flanken*, and, underneath, a vast, gravy-soaked, onion-strewn subsoil: mashed potatoes. Normie has to adjust his paper again and in the process suddenly becomes aware of what has been placed before him. Normie stares at the dish. He puts the paper down and looks at his mother.

"Ma," he says, "what do you think I am, a horse?"

"What is the matter?"

"Look at this plate. How many times have I told you, don't pile the plate five feet high. If I want more I'll ask for it. Look at this. Look at the meat on the plate."

"Please Normie, don't be a *kindt*. There isn't a piece of meat on it. It's all bone!"

"Then take half the bone away."

She ignores him. Normie sits back and looks at her.

"Look Ma," he says, "why don't you listen to me? I don't want anything that bothers you so much. I don't want some exotic food —some strange non-kosher food," he adds, careful to be understood. "All I want is a

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little less than you serve me. All I want is the portion I get in a restaurant."

"The junk you eat in the restaurant is better, hah?"

"Ma, I didn't say the food was better. I said the portions were smaller. You can eat it with a fork, not a shovel. Please take some of this away."

Mrs. Tenenbaum fusses with the dishes, exalted and unmoved.

"So if you don't want it, leave it on the plate. It hurts you?"

"Sure it hurts me. It spoils my appetite. Take some of it back Ma. Please."

Mrs. Tenenbaum is thinking of other things.

"Ma?"

The tea kettle requires her undivided attention.

"All right Ma. Never mind."

Normie gets up and finds another plate. He empties half of his portion into the other plate and, sighing, finishes his meal. After he leaves the table she empties the second plate into various pots and pans. Her head is bloodied but unbowed.

An hour later Sylvia sits in the corner chair. The action changes only slightly. Sylvia's *bête noire* is soup, any kind of soup, but for some obscure reason her mother insists that Sylvia dislikes only chicken soup.

"Ma," says Sylvia, "take this soup away."

"It's not chicken soup," says her mother.

"I know it's not chicken soup. It's barley soup (or tomato soup, or beet soup, or vegetable soup, or pea soup) and I don't like it. Take it away."

"But this you like."

"This I don't like. I know what I like and this isn't it."

Silence. Sylvia sits quietly.

"Well?" she ventures.

"The soup is getting cold," her mother says.

"Oh dear God." Sylvia gets up and walks out of the room.

Mrs. Tenenbaum sighs, pours the soup back into the tureen, and proceeds to serve the rest of the meal. Sylvia walks in and eats the rest of the meal in silence. The soup is not mentioned. Mrs. Tenenbaum is defeated, but she does not surrender.

She never surrendered. She continued, ever secure, ever unruffled, ever triumphant. And I grew to dislike her. As a sixteen-year-old, I could have no sympathy for her. I was too close to the danger of being managed myself. My own mother still tried to foist a warm glass of Ovaltine on me at night when I wanted to sit up and read. The precarious independence of sixteen did not find Mrs. Tenenbaum either amusing or quaint. She irritated me.

EVERY Friday afternoon Mrs. Tenenbaum put two dollar bills into an envelope and sealed it, and later Normie addressed it and mailed it. It was some time before I understood the significance of this ritual. Mrs. Tenenbaum's father, it developed, was still alive. He was very old, and he still lived in Poland; he was blind, and since his wife had died some years before, he was totally dependent upon a cross-grained cousin who did not bother to answer letters. The dollar bills, of course, were for Mrs. Tenenbaum's father.

Every week after mailing the money to her father she wrote another letter to her rich elder brother in Los Angeles (he with his four bakeries and the-son-the-lawyer) in which she alternately castigated him for his lack of filial piety and pleaded with him to redeem himself by sending money—not to her, God forbid, but to Europe. She read both the letters and the answers they provoked to her husband in the evenings. The brother always protested that he was sending ten dollars a week. She never believed it.

"Maybe after all he does send," Mr. Tenenbaum once ventured. "How do you know he doesn't?"

"How do I know? I know! That thief—that miser should send money? It never was and never will be. And anyway if I can afford two dollars he should send twenty-five."

And then, one day, she got a letter from her brother. Apparently the brother had decided to redeem himself with one magnifi-

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cent gesture. He was bringing their father to America. The-son-the-lawyer had dealt with the immigration authorities, and a neighbor who was also coming to America would care for the old man on the trip. The passage money had already been sent, the boat would dock in three weeks, and afterwards, the-son-the-lawyer who had to be in New York on business, would take him to Los Angeles where he would spend the rest of his days in warmth and comfort. But there was one difficulty. The boat would dock three days before the first day of Passover. The old man would not travel on Passover, of course. The question, the stupid, joyous, meaningless, glorious question, was: would Mrs. Tenenbaum take care of the old man during the Passover holidays? She would.

IT WOULD be the most magnificent Seder ever seen in the Bronx. She would need thirty-five or forty pounds of *matzos*, no, fifty pounds. Perhaps even more. And the wine—now there was a headache. She had already prepared some five gallons; but this was nothing, nothing at all. And how one change led to another—she would need more dishes and cutlery. Could she borrow? No, she hated to borrow, especially on Passover. And the people she would have to invite! My God, what a crowd that would be, what a congregation.

"But where are we gonna put them all?"

"We'll put them, we'll put them. Don't worry."

"Oh, I'm not worried, but you should be, Ma. You have no room."

"We'll make room."

Normie pursed his lips and leaned back in his chair.

"You might put a few tables in the living room."

"No. A Seder should be one big table. We have a big foyer and it's plenty room."

"Yeah, I suppose it could work out. The super could give us some boards and sawhorses. . . ."

Mrs. Tenenbaum shook her head with a definiteness that she rarely revealed openly.

"No boards. This Pesach we have a table."

"But Ma, we haven't got a table."

"So we'll buy a table."

Normie sat forward and scratched his ankle.

"But that's stupid. If you buy a real table you're stuck with it for good. We don't need anything like that every day. It would only be in the way."

"So after Pesach we'll bring it down in the cellar."

"It will be ruined in the cellar. Anyway, what do you want to buy it for, if we only need it once a year?"

"But Pesach we need it? And why should we talk now? We have time till Pesach."

"Yeah, but Ma, please don't go off buying a big table. If Schultz rigs something up for us you can cover it with a long tablecloth and no one will know the difference."

"We'll see," said Mrs. Tenenbaum, "we'll see."

IN THE late afternoon about a week later a game of curb ball I was watching was interrupted by the arrival of a large van. The van stopped, swung around, and backed to the curb. I watched as three burly men descended from the cab. One of them entered the building and returned in a few moments with Mr. Schultz, the superintendent, and Mrs. Tenenbaum. The three men, with the aid of Mr. Schultz, lowered an enormous table to the sidewalk. It was the largest table I had ever seen. It had somewhat the same effect upon the kids in the street that the sight of the Grand Canyon has upon an adult. They were silent before the awesome phenomenon.

The four men maneuvered the huge thing into the courtyard, through the door, and into the lobby. They could not swing the table around toward the stairs until Mr. Schultz took the door off the hinges. Then they tried to get it up the stairs. They discovered the table was much too long to negotiate the turn in the stairway. They tried pulling it up the stair well. Impossible. They moved it out again, into the courtyard. After searching diligently, they agreed that the legs were

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not removable, nor could any part of the massive thing be detached, taken down, or in any way divorced from any other.

There was nothing left to do but to hoist the thing up and bring it in through the window. This method had heretofore been reserved for pianos exclusively. The operation took the better part of the afternoon. It was an exciting affair.

Normie came home early and helped man a guide rope, and later Sylvia came home and saw the crowd of children and curious adults staring up at the table. All along the street, fat women and weary men hung out of windows and watched the truckmen. It was, of course, superb entertainment. After all, how often does one see a table suspended between heaven and earth? Children, attracted to the area from the entire neighborhood, bedeviled the truckmen by running in and out of the danger zone directly beneath the high-flying table. They were regularly chased by Mr. Schultz, and as regularly did they scamper back. Sylvia looked up and saw her mother standing on the fire escape, wearing the old brown sweater, open at the waist and buttoned at her throat. She was guiding the table through the window and shouting directions at the truckmen below. It did not add to her dignity. Sylvia turned and ran quickly upstairs. She flung herself across her bed and wept. It was the way the ultimate in feminine grief was then expressed in the movies.

In the days that followed, Mr. Tenenbaum accepted it, as he accepted all of his wife's activities, with an admirable stoicism. "After all," he must have reasoned, "furs and jewels and cars she never wanted. For herself nothing. Never. And if once she wants something I should say no? And if I said no, what would be? The table is here already. So we have a table. A big table. It could be worse."

Normie and Sylvia did not, however, bow gracefully to the inevitable. The table, the immensity of it, stared the two down as long as they remained in the apartment. When he entered or left his room, Normie was careful to open the door only partially; if he forgot it would hit the table. Sylvia edged past it delicately when entering her room to avoid being bruised. It became, to Sylvia and Normie, a hateful, vicious animal with which peace could not be made.

The table dominated the conversation at supper. Normie gave up his evening paper to rail at the table, which he called "the hunk of junk." How soon after the holiday, he wanted to know, would the hunk of junk be carted away to its proper residence, the junk heap? And, granting for the sake of argument only that it was necessary to endure its presence on Passover, why could it not reside with the other odds and ends in the cellar until then? Why did it have to blight his life for two weeks before the holiday? He referred often, and without bothering to be oblique, to the obviously deficient judgment of anyone who would buy a table that rendered an apartment uninhabitable.

Sylvia was even more articulate. She took several hundred opportunities to remind her mother that she did not have a bureau in her room with a mirror worthy of the name; that since the only mirror in the house was in the bathroom, it was impossible to put her make-up on in the morning without evoking screams of protest from Normie. Moreover, the springs on the left side of her bed sagged, while the ones on the right side pinched her in an improper manner. The easy chair in the living room had one rear leg missing and was resting its stump on Will Durant's *Story of Philosophy*.

"Look around you!" she shouted one night. "Is there a single piece of furniture in the house that a secondhand dealer would give you more than five dollars for? Look at the wallpaper in the living room and see if you can find a place where it's not peeling!"

And what did it all come to? Did anything really necessary get bought? A new bed or an easy chair? No. A table! A table for one hundred and fifty dollars. And what a table. Sylvia was quite vivid when describing her reactions to the table. She talked of

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nothing else. Her bitterness, instead of diminishing, increased.

To all of which her mother listened and held her peace. She washed the dishes, she scoured the pots, she poured soup forth from the tureen to the plate and back into the tureen, or she just sat and read the Yiddish paper. She never objected, she never explained, she never defended herself. One would have thought that she had not heard. I was disappointed.

ONE evening, a week after the arrival of the table, Normie came home late and ate supper with Sylvia. They were not, for the moment, irritated by the table. They were amused. Playfully they struck up a conversation designed for the silent, unwilling listener.

"What do you think it looks like?" said Sylvia, munching a piece of pumpernickel.

Normie pursed his lips thoughtfully.

"Hard to say. The first time I saw it I thought it was a new kind of bowling alley—with legs. What do *you* think it looks like?" They stole glances at their mother, who sat near the stove unmoved and unconcerned, reading her paper. There was something majestic in the way she could shut them out, like stupid, squalling children, something majestic and enraging. And into the conversation, which had been good-natured banter, a new and ugly note entered. Sylvia's voice was deliberate:

"It reminds me of something else," she said. "I think you'll agree that's what it really looks like."

"Like what?"

"Guess—like something on a farm. It's long and thin. Think how it will look when that mob she's invited starts eating at it. Something on a farm," she repeated. "Something for animals."

Her mother still sat there reading, unresisting, victoriously passive. She could not be touched, she could not be moved to anger. She was like the thing that she had brought into the house, solid, unresisting, inescapable, triumphant.

Sylvia leaned forward and said a little too loudly: "Like a pig trough, long and thin like a pig trough."

"Take it easy," Normie said. "Take it easy."

"Normie, I work, I earn money. I have some right to say how it's spent." She turned to her mother. "Ma, listen. I know you work hard. You clean the sofa every week. You spill gasoline on the springs until the house stinks for days. Do you think it does any good? Ma, do you? Answer me. Do you think it does any good?"

Her mother did not move.

"Do you know why I don't bring my dates up here anymore? You never asked, did you? You never noticed. Why don't you ask me why, Ma? Why don't you ask me?"

She continued to read the paper.

"Why don't you ask me?"

Silence. Her mother did not turn her head.

"All right. You won't ask me and you're not interested. I'll tell you anyway. Because the last time Ralph came up he sat on the sofa, see, and he leaned back, and I saw a bedbug get on his collar. Understand. Understand now!" she shrieked. "But it's not important. Your stinking table is more important. Just because for one night we'll all sit around it like a bunch of pigs—with an old blind pig in the middle."

SLOWLY, deliberately, Mrs. Tenenbaum took her glasses off, leaned forward, and placed them on the window sill. She sat back and with surprising ferocity she tore the newspaper in two, and completing the movement, she struck the sides of her head with her fists, twice. She was about to do it again when Normie caught her wrists and shouted as if she were deaf, "Ma, what's the matter with you? You crazy?"

She did not look at him, and in a moment he released her. She sat staring blankly at the stove for a moment, and then began to rock softly back and forth.

"I'm crazy," she said. "You're right, I'm crazy. What do you want from me?" she said, "what do you want from me? I have hurt

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you? I have ruined your lives? I bought a table. All right. Call me a dog, a snake, a pig. But what do you want from my father?"

Very slowly, painfully, she struggled to her feet and stood facing her children.

"For you he is an old blind pig. For me he is a father. You are thinking, if he is blind why does he need a table? Boards are good enough."

"No one said that, Ma," Normie interrupted.

"You have to say it? You think it. Yes, he can't see, but he can feel. I want a real table, not boards. I want he should be comfortable. He should think his daughter has a fine house, his little daughter who went to America when he still had his eyes. He should know that there are guests by a big table, many guests, they came because for them he is not an old blind pig. A real table, not boards. Boards he had in Europe.

"And you, my fine children, my fine educated college students, they call a grandfather an old blind pig. Is it his fault he's old? Is it his fault he's blind? May God not punish you, He hears you. Listen to me. I haven't seen him from before you were born, before you made in your bloomers. He is my father and I give him respect. This I do not expect from my children. I pray to God every Yom Kippur I should die before I have to be supported by you. Me you can call an old blind pig, if you want. Not my father."

Sylvia shook her head as if she were clearing it from sleep. She started to say something, then covered her face with her hands and ran out of the room. Normie sat quite still. Then he said: "She didn't mean it, Ma. Things just got on her nerves."

He walked out of the room.

Mrs. Tenenbaum sat down and stared at the wall. Her big breasts heaved spasmodically. She looked and sounded as if she wanted to cry but had forgotten how. I watched her for a moment and then I turned away from the window. It was the last time. I never watched them again.

TO YANKEL ADLER

GEORGE BARKER

THERE was that Jew making love to a chair.
What did it do? O avatar of Love
It turned back first of all into a tree
Then to the seed, then to the hand that planted.
He ran his brush down the back and laid bare
The hundred thousand hearts of the objective.
He handled a wooden leg and physiology
Gave up a tabernacle. This is what he wanted.

Eavesdropper on the gossiping of sorrows
How do you never frighten them? They stay
Exchanging those secrets, like birds, in your presence
For which I count the feathers of my sparrows
But overhear nothing. Then why do all things obey
Your hylic hand? It is because you are absence.

GEORGE BARKER, one of the outstanding younger British poets, has had several volumes of verse published, the most recent being *News of the World*. The painter Yankel Adler, to whom the poem is addressed, was the subject of an article in the September 1949 issue of COMMENTARY.

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HAVE THE ARABS GIVEN UP THE "SECOND ROUND"?

Signs of a New Maturity in the Arab League

IAN MIKARDO

THE princes and politicians of the Arab states are slowly learning to recognize, and to face, the facts of life. They are beginning to understand that the State of Israel can't be treated as a momentary aberration of history; that the problem of their refugees can't be settled merely by using them as an instrument of propaganda; that the Near East can't just withdraw from the larger conflict between the Western powers and Russia; and that the slogans of jingoist editors and rioting students are no substitute for a coherent political policy.

The important recent meeting of the Political Committee of the Arab League, in January and early February, at Cairo, was characterized by a sober sense of responsibility which contrasts sharply with most of the past pronouncements and behavior of many Arab leaders. This meeting wasted little time on those half-pleading, half-threatening complaints against the UN, against the Western powers, and against Israel which have been the standard activity of the Arab League in the past: instead, its participants got down to the serious business of trying to solve their internal differences and to frame a common, constructive policy for their relations with the outside world.

The importance attached to this particular Cairo conference was evidenced by the high rank of the leaders of the delegations. Saudi Arabia was represented by the viceroy Prince Feisal, and all the other states except Yemen by their prime ministers. Leaving aside the propagandist and face-saving formulas, one may say that these leaders committed themselves, with some reluctance but nevertheless firmly, to three propositions: (1) that there can be no "second round" against Israel; (2) that the Arab refugees will have to be settled in the Arab lands; and (3) that in the East-West conflict the Arab states will have to throw in their lot with the West.

The contrast between the confident arrogance of public pronouncements and the realistic humility of private decisions is most clearly illustrated by the Arab leaders' acceptance of the fact that the vendetta against Israel must now be abandoned. Some of them were uttering bloodcurdling threats against Israel right up to the eve of the conference, and they will doubtless do so again, because they cannot easily escape from the need to appease the belligerent nationalist public opinion they themselves have created.

Some of this threatening talk has centered on a proposed march into Israel, in violation of the armistice agreements, of a column of Arab refugees, headed by women and children. Several times a date had been fixed for this venture, and each time it was postponed. The most recent occasion—and probably the last—on which this happened was at a meeting last December of Arab refugees in Syria and the Lebanon: it was then announced over the Baghdad radio that the march would take place on January 2, and, the announcement added, "the re-

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CURRENT incidents on the tense borders between Israel and Syria and Israel and Transjordan have focused attention again on the huge and menacing question which, in the third year of the Jewish state, still remains unanswered: will the Arab states unleash a new war against Israel? IAN MIKARDO, reporting the recent meetings of the Arab League, sees, as a balance to the rise in border tensions, signs of a growth in political maturity of the Arabs, which, in his opinion, may deter them from further wasteful adventures against Israel. Mr. Mikardo, a member of the British Parliament and of the Executive Committee of the Labor party, has written widely for British periodicals and is the author of several books.

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sponsibility for such a march will lie on the General Assembly of the UN, which has hitherto failed to find a solution for the refugee problem." I was in the *kibbutz* of Afikim in Galilee on January 2, and the defenses of the whole area were alerted. But the Israelis were not really worried. "These Arab threats are all talk," said one tough settler. "Just the sounding brass and the tinkling cymbal," he added, sublimely unaware that he was quoting from the New Testament.

There were, at the January-February conference of the League, other sounding brasses and tinkling cymbals. There was the then Syrian premier, Nazem el Koudsi, stressing the importance of unifying all Arab military plans "in view of the likelihood of the renewal of a war with Israel." There was the Baghdad spokesman who described the Jordanian-Israeli border clash early this year as "the first spark of the second round." And there was Abdul Rahman Azzam Pasha, secretary general of the League, declaring that if Egyptian national demands were not fulfilled there was "danger of war throughout the Middle East."

Why is it that, notwithstanding all this saber rattling, the second round has ceased to be practical politics? There are three answers to this question.

THE first of these is the serious divisions which exist among the Arab states, and which the January Cairo meeting did little to bridge. For a long time Iraq has worked towards a union with Syria, and she now feels this union to be more urgent because of the dangers inherent in the apparently chronic instability of Syrian governments. It was this case which the Iraqi premier, General Nuri es Said, was arguing when he recently said that "there are too many barriers between the Arab states." The projected Iraqi-Syrian union is supported, for dynastic reasons, by King Abdullah, and is firmly opposed by King Farouk. For a long time Syria has been under Egyptian influence: that influence declined to some extent after the assassination of Husni el Zaim in 1949 but has recently recovered, and Egypt is anxious to preserve the independence of Syria in order to maintain a sphere of influence to the north of Israel—and of Jordan.

Nor is this the only respect in which the government of Transjordan does not see eye to eye with Cairo and with some of the other Arab capitals. The incorporation of Arab Palestine into Jordan is King Abdullah's dream come true, but it is not yet recognized by the other Arab states. His desire for a peace treaty with Israel is no secret, and it makes nonsense of "second-war" talk by an Arab League of which he is a member, especially as his Legion was the only Arab army which remained undefeated in the "first" war. And King Abdullah is not unaware of the fact that Arab League agents, operating within his borders and from Nazareth just across his border, are trying to stir up revolt against him as a tool of Great Britain, as a lackey of the UN (which in turn is a lackey of the Jews!), and therefore as a betrayer of the sacred Arab cause.

These political frictions make virtually impossible that coordination of the military forces of the Arab states without which a second round cannot hope for success. True, a collective security pact was signed at Cairo, but its real worth is much less than its face value. Before the Cairo meeting the heads of the Arab armies were discussing a Syrian-Iraqi plan for full-scale military alignment against Israel. They hoped to get from each League state a firm promise of the number of troops it was prepared to mobilize on Israel's borders and of a further number that it would be ready to contribute to a unified army under a combined high command located in Egypt. But the Cairo collective security pact was much too restricted and too indefinite to fulfill any of these hopes.

Yemen signed the pact with so many reservations that her adhesion is virtually valueless. Saudi Arabia expressed no open reservations, but nobody is in any doubt that Ibn Saud is far too happy with his Americans and their oil royalties (and perhaps now their air bases) to feel any desire for

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military adventure outside his own territories. Iraq wouldn't forego freedom of action in financial matters. Jordan, too, refused to sign, and justified her refusal with a devastating array of criticisms of the pact. It failed, she said, to define the terms "a threat of war" and "aggression," and it failed to limit the term "aggression" only to acts of countries outside the Arab League. Its mechanism was cumbersome, and it left unclarified its effects on existing treaties — an obvious reference to the Anglo-Jordan treaty. Worst of all, since a two-thirds majority for action was binding on all the members, a war could be precipitated by six states, who would then leave the fighting of it to the minority (say Egypt and Jordan) which had voted against it. This Jordanian case against the pact is a formidable one; yet it is no more than a *pilpul* disguising Abdullah's real reason for his refusal to sign—which is that he doesn't want to close the door to the possibility of an Israel-Jordan treaty.

THE second reason for the abandonment of the plan for another "round" is that the Arab states have at last come to understand that their warlike threats no longer impress the Western powers. Since the end of the Israeli-Arab war, most of the League states have felt that their defeat lowered them in the eyes of the world and that the only way to rehabilitate their military reputation was to fight another war and win it. Indeed, they thought they might not actually have to fight the war so long as they always appeared to be on the point of launching it. They considered that if they sounded sufficiently bellicose, the Western powers would hasten to give them concessions in order to appease them.

This is the argument, as it was put by the Cairo daily *Al Misri*: "The Arab states find it hard to understand the lack of sympathy with which their needs are met by the West, in view of the attitude adopted [by the Western powers] towards Israel. If the Arabs had used the present time of international tension to renew the war against Israel by attacking her on all sides and giving her a good lesson, there would have come about a great change in the way the Arabs are treated by the rest of the world." This expresses the Arabs' opportunist outlook bluntly enough; but another Arab organ, *Falastin*, was still more frank about the connection between Arab hostility to Israel and Arab demands upon the Western world. "The Arabs," it said, "must not give permission to the West for the construction of military bases in their territories unless our lost tribes in Palestine are regained."

But this poker game is over, and the Arabs sadly recognize the fact. The preoccupations of the West in other parts of the world have made the Great Powers anxious to preserve the peace of the Near East and therefore hostile to any potential violator of it. Britain's improved relations with Israel, and the cessation of her efforts to discourage an Israel-Jordan treaty, are pointers in the same direction. The Anglo-French-American declaration against any revision of Near Eastern boundaries by force still stands on the record. For a time some of the Arabs thought they had only to wait for a moment when the attention of the Great Powers was diverted from the Near East by an outbreak of trouble in Europe or elsewhere, and that this diversion would allow them to win a quick victory over Israel which could be presented to the UN as a *fait accompli*. But even that hope has vanished. For one thing, the maintenance by Israel of substantial defense forces and substantial defense expenditure rules out the possibility of a quick *coup;* and for another there are many officers in the British Army in the Canal Zone who would dearly like an excuse to march their troops back into Cairo.

The third reason why the Arab rulers cannot commit their armies to another war against Israel is that they need their armies to maintain their rule at home. Every one of them lives in continual fear of social uprising. The coming of the refugees from Palestine, with their educated civil-servant class and their traditions of comparatively high living standards and a non-feudal social system, has brought a new ferment of dissatis-

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faction; and the rapid emancipation of the Arabs of Israel provides an object lesson for the underprivileged classes of the Arab lands which creates yet another long-term threat.

In Jordan, King Abdullah is engaged in a serious struggle with the political leaders who have appeared as a result of his first essay in constitutional rule. The greater part of them are anti-British, anti-Israel, and anti-Abdullah; and the King's chief ally against them is his Arab Legion. He would therefore be unwilling to commit that Legion to another battle outside the country, as indeed he was unwilling to commit it to full-scale action in the Israeli-Arab war, for fear that its depletion would weaken his internal position. In Syria, the successive military *coups d'état* have made the army a medicine for internal consumption only. In Iraq, the army is always looking back over its shoulder at the rebellious Kurds, who are too warlike and too near the precious oil wells to be left for long.

FOR all these reasons, a "come-back campaign" against Israel is no longer practical politics for the Arab states. But that does not mean, of course, that the rulers of those states are ready, or even able, to pass from war against Israel to peace with Israel at any time in the immediate future. They need to continue to have the Jews as their enemies for the same reason that other rulers have, i.e., to distract attention from the causes of internal discontents. They can't, so soon, swallow the flamboyant anti-Zionist utterances which stand within recent memory. They dare not make a present to their political opponents of that xenophobia which is the only reliable vote-catcher in any Arab country. And they are unwilling to see Israel gathering in the economic benefits which would flow from a real peace.

Alone among them all, King Abdullah is wise enough to see that for his country, as for Israel, the benefits of peace would outweigh the advantages which he can hope to gain from the absence of peace. But even he, as we have already said, is by no means successful in carrying his country with him.

THE second question to which the Arab politicians are directing some realistic thinking is the problem of the refugees. On this problem the Political Committee of the Arab League came to two conclusions: (1) that the refugees should be resettled where they are now; and (2) that the League would cooperate with the United Nations refugee organizations, whilst pressing for more funds for resettlement schemes.

This *volte-face* has been largely stimulated by a belated realization that the refugees, when they are resettled, will represent a valuable accretion of manpower. If the UN and its organizations can be induced to carry the cost of resettlement, the Arab states will reap the profit of an increased population. They continue to declare, of course, that their acceptance of the refugees is "without prejudice to the refugees' rights to repatriation or compensation," but this declaration represents in fact a demand for money and nothing else.

There is also a new realization among the Arab states that Israel, which some time ago was showing up badly in the UN discussions on the refugees, has now gone a long way toward putting herself right with world opinion. She has done this, first, by admitting in principle the refugees' right to compensation for certain forms of property; second, by agreeing to discuss the refugee problem in advance of all other matters outstanding between the Arab states and herself; and, third, by contributing generously to the General Assembly's "reintegration fund."

By contrast, the Arabs have shown themselves less accommodating and less generous. The rich Palestinian Arabs who are now in the capitals of Egypt, Syria, and the Lebanon, where they had carefully salted away their "funk money," have shown no disposition to help their poorer brethren. Seven of the eight Arab states contributed to the UN relief for the Arab Palestine refugees in 1949, and among them they donated 16 per cent of the total subscriptions; but only five contributed to the UN Relief and Works Agency for these refugees in 1950-51, and

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they accounted for only 4 per cent of the total funds, while for 1951-52 they have reduced even this modest contribution by two-thirds.

Since the Arab states are neither able to play the refugees as an international propaganda card nor willing to bear a fair share of the cost of them, they are settling down to dealing with the problem on a realistic basis, and to devoting their energies to obtaining the maximum help from UN funds. The refugees may thus come to be treated, as they ought always to have been, not as a political question but as a social and economic task.

The Arab states' changing reactions to both Israel and the Palestine refugees has in turn created a changing attitude toward the general East-West conflict. There never was, and in the light of the social and economic structures of the Arab countries there never could have been, any question of these countries throwing in their lot with Russia. The only question that arose was whether they should openly throw in their lot with the West or whether they should play "hard to get" in order to obtain a good price for their alliance. It was the Egyptians who led the second of these two schools of thought. Russia, they argued, was far away, and the present international tension offered a golden opportunity for Arab nationalism to cash in on Western difficulties and make the West pay for Arab support. Egypt's failure to support the United Nations' defense of South Korea was a counter in this game. On the other side of the argument, it is Premier Nuri es Said of Iraq who continually points out that the West isn't deceived by these posturings, and that since the Arabs can in the end make only one choice they might just as well make a virtue of necessity and offer their alliance unreservedly.

Nuri's influence was reflected in the debates on the communiqué issued by the Cairo conference. All the contributors to those debates expressed their opposition to Communism, and added that since their countries were democracies their support for the democratic nations in a hot war would have to be automatic.

One factor which tended to confirm them in this attitude was the realization that the Western powers, in considering their defenses in the Near East, have been looking for allies outside the Arab states, notably in Turkey and Israel. The support which those countries gave to the UN action in Korea seems, to Arab eyes, to have paid higher dividends than Egypt's calculated equivocation.

So far as Turkey is concerned, her frontier with Russia and her control of the Straits create for her a ready-made role in any future war. But as for Israel, the conversations between her military leaders and those of the Western powers do not by any means indicate any integration of the forces of Israel into the Western combination. Far from it. Any such integration is inhibited by the internal pressure on the government by the left-wing Mapam and by the physical factor that the West cannot, as yet, spare those arms without which the Haganah cannot undertake the commitment of recognizing any potential enemy other than the Arabs.

But even though Western military cooperation with Israel is still in the embryo stage, the example of Turkey and Israel contributed much at Cairo to persuading the Arab states, in their debates on world affairs, that they ought to become good, unquestioning Westerners.

But the debates, notwithstanding this virtuously glowing conclusion, were halfhearted and perfunctory compared with the discussions on purely Near Eastern matters. So long as the cold war remains cold, the Arab states want to keep out of it, partly because of the natural desire of small states to stay out of Great-Power quarrels, and partly because of the Arabs' permanent unwillingness to put their money on any horse before the result of the race is declared.

But in international statesmanship the princes and politicians of the Arab states are, in general, passing from adolescence to adult stature. They are learning to face reality.

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HUNGARY'S AND RUMANIA'S NAZIS-IN-RED

Hitler's Graduates Staff Stalin's New Order

BÉLA FABIAN

TWO correspondents of an American news agency called on Deputy Prime Minister Rákosi of Hungary in the summer of 1945. At the very outset of their conversation, one of the newspapermen produced a printed form whose text ran somewhat like this: "I admit that I was formerly a member of the Arrow Cross party. I pledge myself, from now on, to be faithful to the Communist party." "Is this declaration authentic?" the journalist asked. "Of course it is authentic," replied Rákosi. "How else could one build up a Communist party in this country? How else could I find enough Communists?"

By this and similar routes former Nazis have been swarming into the East European Communist parties, where they are received with open arms. The Nazis need a place of refuge, the Communist party badly needs members: here, obviously, is cause for a marriage of convenience. But so vast is the scale of this recruitment that it would seem to be just as much a marriage of true minds. Indeed, by now the people of these satellite countries—liberals, intellectuals, trade-union leaders, socialists, businessmen, workers, peasants, Jews—see little to distinguish the red dictatorship from the previous brown one.

This state of affairs is not secret; and it would seem to have a rather important bearing on current political discussions. Yet it has received only the most fleeting attention in the American press or on the part of "progressive" opinion generally, so ingrained is some American liberals' habit of self-suspicion, and of focusing criticism on their own government as the real enemy. Foreign correspondents continue to devote themselves to long and indignant accounts of the elections of minor Nazis to some town council in one of the states of West Germany, while neglecting the emergence of the Communist-fascist regimes in the satellite countries. The term Communist-fascist is used advisedly. For in Eastern Europe it is not a case of the government making concessions to an unregenerate public opinion, or of a misguided generosity on the part of some leading officials, or of just plain stupidity or ill will. Rather is it a systematic policy of building a regime called Communist with personnel whose chief qualification for leadership in this enterprise is their demonstrated prowess in fascist movements.

Does this sound exaggerated? Well, here is a specimen "Who's Who" of some of the former Nazis in Hungary and Rumania who have blandly swapped the swastika for the hammer and sickle.

KÁLMÁN ZOLNAY, one of the more vicious Nazi officials of the Pest county court, is remembered for having publicly urged that not only all persons of Jewish descent be deported, but also anyone having any Jewish friends or relatives, because "the Jews would certainly have contaminated his way of thinking." Under the Communist regime, Zolnay has become chief of the department that handles prison matters in the Ministry of

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BÉLA FABIAN here presents us with a brief "Who's Who" of former fascists who have been rewarded for their past behavior with positions of authority in the Communist regimes of Hungary and Rumania; the list could be substantially expanded—apparently an impeccable fascist background is a special guarantee of fitness to rule in the "new proletarian democracies." Dr. Fabian was for seventeen consecutive years (1922-39) a member of the Hungarian parliament. After the Germans invaded Hungary in 1944, he was deported to Auschwitz, then to the concentration camps of Oranienburg, Sachsenhausen, and Ohrdruf, escaping from the latter in 1945. He arrived in this country in 1948.

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Justice. He has there gained some further notoriety by proposing legislation to make it the legal duty of every citizen to maintain close watch over a specified section in the vicinity of his own residence, and keep a written account of the activities of his neighbors.

MÁRTON BODONYI, who conducted the investigations against Cardinal Mindszenty, had served, under the name of Schweitzer, as a military prosecutor during the Nazi occupation. In that post he had demanded—and usually obtained—the penalty of hanging for every officer and soldier who deserted the Hungarian army, then fighting side by side with the Wehrmacht. After the Russians occupied Hungary, Bodonyi was appointed chief state prosecutor in Nyiregyhaza.

GYULA ALAPI, the infamous state prosecutor of the Mindszenty trial (who received a reward of 100,000 florins for successfully carrying out this special assignment), became a Communist party member in 1945. Previously, he had played an important role in Christian-Conservative student organizations: "The principles of Christian politics are a Christian order of the world, papal encyclicals, and the fight against the barbarism of Moscow," he once announced in a speech. In 1944, Alapi, then state prosecutor of Gyor, joined the fascistic Arrow Cross party. ". . . A reliable party member and a zealous Nazi," is the notation on the margin of his party record. Today, Alapi represents the government at all major trials.

VILMOS OLTY, president of the court in the Mindszenty trial, as well as in the Vogeler and Rajk trials, is today perhaps the most widely known personage in Hungarian "jurisprudence." Previous to the German invasion, Vilmos Olty had been an extreme rightist. As an official in the Ministry of Justice in 1941, he was charged with the confiscation of mills belonging to Jewish persons, and executed the law with a zeal that went far beyond regulations. Subsequently, Olty joined the staff of the Hungarian-German Society and was sent to Munich on a scholarship for basic indoctrination in Nazi ideology. After the Russians marched in, Olty joined the Communist party. In his capacity as a judge of the "People's Court" of Budapest in 1945, he was noted for the severity of his sentences. It was Olty who invented and introduced the practice of having "dress rehearsals" of trials, a technique put to efficient use in the Mindszenty and Vogeler cases. In the Rajk trial, Olty emphatically played upon anti-Semitic sentiment. He never failed to ask each defendant his father's and grandfather's names—in order to disclose a possible Jewish origin. He even forced Rajk, not a Jew, and in fact a known anti-Semite, whose brother had been an important official under the Nazis, to confess that he had conspired with the Zionists.

SÁNDOR ZÖLD, Hungary's present Minister of the Interior, first came to public notice on November 14, 1934, in the town of Debrecen. That day began a series of attacks on Jews at the medical college of Debrecen, in the course of which the Jewish students were driven out by the Nazis. Among the twenty-four anti-Semitic rioters arrested were Sándor Zöld and his close friend Szilard Ujhelyi, until recently an undersecretary (the third ranking official in each ministry) of the Communist government (he was swept away in a purge early in April). Sándor Zöld went on to practice medicine in Nagyvarad, a town he had to leave after performing an illegal abortion. He then moved up to the position of gynecologist at the hospital of Berettyóujfalu, where he is remembered as having been a Nazi. He became a councilor in the Ministry of the Interior as early as 1945 and soon advanced to undersecretary. On the demand of Rajk, Zöld was removed from his position by the Communist party because of involvement in a scandal—he was charged with receiving a share of the money extorted from the inmates of concentration camps by a fraudulent lawyer. After Rajk's fall, his successor had Zöld reappointed to his former position. In the summer of 1950, he became Minister of the Interior.

JÁNOS VIKOL began his medical career as a leading member of the Csaba Fraternal

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Society, a right-wing medical students' organization. The Csaba repeatedly started riots against Jewish students, demanding that they not be allowed to sit on the same benches with the Christian students. After his graduation, Dr. Vikol became an active member of the rightist medical association, the M.O.N.E., which raised the demand that Jewish doctors should be limited to treating Jewish patients only. Captured on the Russian front in World War II, Vikol asked to be sent to Moscow, to the Communist party school there. Ernö Gerö, Rákosi's present Number Two, was one of his teachers at that school. Today, Dr. Vikol is undersecretary in the Ministry of Public Welfare.

Alajos Rottenbiller was formerly a district medical health officer in Budapest, and a card-bearing member of the Arrow Cross party. Dr. Rottenbiller joined the Communists in 1945 and at the present time enjoys the special protection of a top-ranking Communist minister's wife. He is chief inspector of public health in Hungary.

Antal Babits, the present chairman of the Doctors' Union, in his former capacity of professor at the Szeged medical college, participated in the expulsion of Jewish students. A former card-bearing member of the Arrow Cross, he became a Communist party member in 1945. His wife, the actress Ilona Eszterházi, who joined the National Socialist party in Berlin, when acting in German films, is now a member of the National Theater in Budapest.

Ivan Boldizsár, Hungary's most prominent journalist, was until recently undersecretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (He has been demoted, since then, to editor in chief of the Budapest daily *Magyar Nemzet.*) He was born the son of Jewish parents, but changed his religion. One of his articles, published in the *Nemzeti Ujsag* in the pre-Nazi era, and entitled "Thomas Mann and His Jews," is a prize specimen of anti-Semitic journalism. At the time of the deportations of Jews in 1944, Boldizsár continued to perform confidential assignments for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and to receive his salary. In the fall of 1944, an anti-Nazi conspiracy by high-ranking Hungarian army officers was betrayed to the authorities. Boldizsár, who was arrested along with the conspirators, was released after several days. Presumably, he played a dubious role in the betrayal—a fact which permitted the Communists to blackmail him mercilessly.

László Piros, an unknown former cobbler, has achieved the most staggeringly successful military career under the present regime. Piros was one of the perpetrators of the infamous Miskolc pogrom in 1946, in the course of which several Jews were murdered by a Communist mob. When the government embarked on its new anti-Semitic trend in 1948, the hitherto unknown Piros came into prominence. Today, as commander of the Frontier Guards with the rank of a major general, his chief assignments are preventing Jews from escaping the country and the carrying out of deportations to the Soviet Union. He is also an alternate member of the Politburo.

Béla Csikós Nagy can boast a long Nazi heritage. His parents were close friends and staunch supporters of the fascist murderer Szalasi, supplying him with food and other comforts during his three years' prison sentence in Szeged from 1938 to 1941. Csikós Nagy was secretary to the rightist Minister of Finance, Lajos Reményi Schneller (hanged in 1946), and wrote a pro-Nazi pamphlet proving the inevitability of Nazi victory in the war. Today he is the virtual head of Hungary's totalitarian economic system, and is known as the real power behind Zoltán Vas, head of the Planning Bureau.

Tibor Fajth, section chief of the Planning Bureau, was recently decorated with the Gold Medal of Labor by the Communist government. Fajth, a Communist party member since 1945, was in pre-Nazi times an official on the mayor's staff at the Budapest City Hall. As a member of the Arrow Cross, he conspicuously wore the party's insignia on the sleeve of his coat. Fajth bears a significant share of the responsibility for the death of his thirty-six Jewish colleagues at

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City Hall who were sent to the Russian front by the Nazis. After the Nazi defeat, a delegation of Jewish survivors called on the mayor of Budapest and made a complaint against Fajth's holding office. "It doesn't matter who pushes the cart, so long as it keeps rolling," was the reply they received.

Joseph Takács, another section chief in the Planning Bureau and a close friend of Fajth, is also a former member of the Arrow Cross, and also shares responsibility for the death of the thirty-six Jewish City Hall officials. During the German occupation Takács was the mayor of Szolnok, where he supervised the rounding up and deportation of the town's Jews. After the Nazi defeat, he was appointed to a post in the Ministry of the Interior, being promoted after a few months to the rank of councilor.

Sándor Scmidt, long-time Nazi, has been for years the omnipotent general manager of Hungary's greatest coal-mining company, which worked the mines of Dorog and of Salgótarján. His brutality to members of the Jewish labor battalions assigned to the coal mines under his direction in 1943 was a special scandal. The Communists have kept him at his post.

Iván Bakócz joined the Communist party while still under investigation for his activities as a member of the Arrow Cross. He became deputy chief of the Communist Economic Police, and earned a quite special reputation for blackmailing, terror, and sadism. Not long ago, after his immediate superior was purged (via the gallows), Bakócz fled to the West.

Ákos Mayor had formerly been assessor of the Military Court under the Nazis, in which capacity he passed ruthless sentences against Hungarian "deserters" from the Axis armies. In recognition of loyal service, Hitler bestowed upon him two high decorations. After the arrival of the Russians, Ákos Mayor was recruited into the Communist party by his brother, Tamás Mayor, now the director of the National Theater. Ákos Mayor became a judge, then president of the N.O.T., the court of appeal of the "People's Court," where he treated opponents of the Communists as harshly as he previously had anti-Nazis. One day Ákos Mayor disappeared without a trace and is rumored to have been "invited" to Russia.

Except for the difference in names, the situation in Rumania duplicates that in Hungary. In the fall of 1944, Techari Georgescu, Rumania's Minister of the Interior, made an agreement with Grozdea, head of the extremist branch of the Iron Guard, by which the Communist party would henceforth welcome former Iron Guardists into its ranks. In a public speech in 1945, Communist boss Ana Pauker openly called upon the Iron Guard members to join the Communist party. It was in response to this call that such a man as Ion Burdycea, one of the Iron Guard leaders chiefly responsible for the Jassy pogrom in which 12,000 Jews were massacred, joined the Communist party in 1945, and until 1946 was actually—of all things—Minister of Education.

Here are a few of the outstanding ex-Nazis who, at this writing, wield Communist power:

Stefan Vojtec, a member of the Politburo, chairman of the state-owned cooperatives, Minister of Education from 1945-48, was formerly the editor of the *Sentinell*, the official press organ of the joint German-Rumanian general staff during the war.

General Alexandru Petrescu, the director of concentration camps under the Antonescu regime, recently presided over the military courts that sentenced Juliu Maniu, Ion Michalache, and other anti-Communists.

Aurel Vijoli, a legionary commander of the Iron Guard, is today Assistant Minister of Finance and governor of the State Bank.

Lotar Radaceanu, alias Wurzer, a former socialist of German descent, was an agent of German economic penetration of Rumanian industry during the war, and in that capacity he made numerous trips to Germany. Today he is one of the thirteen members of the Politburo of the Communist party, and, besides, a member of the seventeen-member

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organizational bureau of the party. In addition, he is Minister of Labor and Social Security.

VICTOR VOJEN, former Iron Guard commander, former editor of the Iron Guard paper, and from October 1940 to January 1941 minister to Rome, has been since 1947 the private secretary and intimate of Ana Pauker.

APPROXIMATELY 200,000 members of the Rumanian middle classes are at present toiling as slave laborers on the construction of the Danube-Black Sea Canal. They live in tents, are without blankets, and their rations are below subsistence level. About 40,000 of them are Jews. Their guards are almost exclusively former members of the Iron Guards. It is no wonder that the death toll of the victims exceeds a hundred a day.

A passage in a letter recently received by the writer from a friend who succeeded in escaping from behind the Iron Curtain precisely sums up the Hungarian-Rumanian situation: "The same people as under the Nazis are today locked up in prisons and concentration camps. These same people are guarded by the same persons who guarded them under the Nazis."

East may be East, and West, West; and perhaps the twain never shall meet. But in such countries as Hungary and Rumania, Left is not Left; nor is Right, Right. The twain—being totalitarian twins—have met, mingled, and merged into a regime of uniform terror.

I WAS THIS BLACK BOY

JACOB SLOAN

Once I was walking about in the black of night and in darkness,
and saw a blind man walking with a torch in his hand.
I said to him: My son, why the torch?
He said to me: So long as this torch is in my hand, people see me
and save me from the pits and the thorns and the thistles.—Midrash

I WAS this black boy bawling for my wool
arm, caught like a white fox in the sprung
trap of subway doors, calling, Pull! pull
me from the choking underground of mother!
—And all my sophist father does is show
in photograph his clever haircombed son
playing him with a real telephone.
I was my brother's son and held my blind
young anguish up high for men to see.
But my father had his own old torch,
my uncle saw my bleeding, but no thorns.
I am this man of peace whom all the bold
children shoot with tommyguns of tin,
and die a thousand mimic deaths,
yet trust
to live again till son of my delight
call me to the window, at his side
to watch the flashing signs of our God:
Who is the engineer and drives the train
underneath the pavement of our lives.
I am this man who rides dark with hope
till I be father, and my son bring light.

JACOB SLOAN is on the editorial staff of the *American Jewish Year Book*. The present poem is one in a series of five entitled "I Was, I Am." The other four have appeared in previous issues of COMMENTARY.

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FROM THE AMERICAN SCENE

THE BAGEL

On This Rock . . .

IRVING PFEFFERBLIT

AMID the more and more open scandal of what American know-how has done to American bread—white, whole wheat, rye, or vitaminized—that tasteless, flavorless, bodiless miracle of modern science—the Jewish *bagel* stands out like a golden vision of the bygone days when life was better, when things had substance, staying power, and an honest flavor of their own. As a form of bread, the bagel shares this distinction in America with a few other non-mechanized survivors from the old country, such as pumpernickel, *challah,* and the Italian white bread still baked and sold in first-generation neighborhoods; like challah, the bagel is a distinctively Jewish contribution to the good life in Columbus's continent.

It is true that Miss Faye Emerson, asked on a recent broadcast of "We Take Your Word" to define a bagel, answered unhesitatingly that it was a kind of English hunting dog. But perhaps Miss Emerson was suffering from mike-fright. Actually, knowledge and appreciation of bagels has thoroughly penetrated large areas of American life, and the bagel market is quite steady—remarkably so, in fact, considering that the definition accepted as correct after Miss Emerson's failure was: "A bagel is a doughnut dipped in concrete." (Speaking of doughnuts, it should be mentioned that the official American name for a bagel, as given in Leah W. Leonard's book *Jewish Cookery,* is "water doughnut." Try that on your local delicatessen store some time.)

Bagels aren't just another form of bread, much less another form of doughnut; they have a being and character of their own. They are—well, bagels. That is to say, eaten with lox and cream cheese on a Sunday morning, or just with lox, or just with cream cheese, they are, putting the matter baldly, a delight. The aesthetic harmony of that first combination alone—setting aside for a moment the whole question of dunking—would seem to guarantee the continued existence of the bagel, in the teeth of all the Wonder bakeries in America.

But, beyond all this, bagels have a few other distinctions that make them quite unique. For one thing, there is shape. The bagel is round, like a doughnut, and has a hole at its center; and this quality of circular recurrence combined with central emptiness seems to exert some potent fascination over the human mind: a whole complex of jokes and proverbs clusters around the bagel that the simple idea of ordinary bread is powerless to provoke, and the thought of a bagel, like that of a doughnut, seems to contain somehow, for a great many people, something inherently comic. Think of a bagel and you are likely to think of something profound, such as "In my beginning

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HALF doughnut and half roll, of formidably crusty exterior, and yet yielding an infinite if elusive deliciousness, despised and yet forever chosen, does not the *bagel* partake of the central paradoxes of Jewish existence and perhaps of the essential quality of the Jews themselves, called, on highest authority, a stiff-necked people? Perhaps not. But if the basic mystery remains impenetrable, there is still much that the inquiring sociologist can discover and report. IRVING PFEFFERBLIT has published stories and poems in *Harper's* and other magazines. He was born in New York in 1926 and attended Columbia University.

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is my end"; think of a loaf of ordinary bread and you are likely to be just bored.

For another distinction, bagels aren't just baked, like every other form of bread, they are *boiled* and baked. This is what accounts for the distinctive glossiness of bagels. It also accounts, as any bagel-maker will tell you, for their wholesomeness. Having been subjected to two separate cooking processes, they naturally come out twice as good. (We are discussing, it will be understood, only the bagel classic and proper, not the egg bagel, a mixed form made by adding eggs to the basic formula and, in most informed opinion, including our own, an inferior type. It is, however, outside our province at this time to examine the claims of the egg bagel at any length.)

LIKE the invention of the wheel or the discovery of *gefilte* fish, the origin of bagels is lost in the mists of antiquity, and dating it, or placing it in a particular locale, presents a problem before which the keenest scholar must admit defeat. The etymology of the word is apparently from the German *beigen,* to bend. We know that making bagels has always been a Jewish specialty, and that it originated somewhere in the Jewish culture of Eastern Europe. There is extant in the archives of the Jewish Scientific Institute (Yivo) a printed broadside put out in Vilna in 1869 which contains two separate blessings intended for egg bagels—one, after the opening formula, "Blessed art Thou, Lord of the universe . . ." concludes: *"boreh minei mzonos"*—"who creates various kinds of food"; and another concludes: *"al h'michya v'al hakalkala"*—"[Blessed art thou] for sustenance." It is also clear that bagels had by that time entered the fabric of folk life in Eastern Europe deeply enough to lend a byword to the language; if a merchant wished to protest the steadfast and unchanging nature of his prices, he would say *"Es iz vie a bagel far a groshen."* But all this tells us nothing but that bagels have been known and eaten for at least a hundred years. Beyond that lies only the outer darkness.

Of course, there are legends. One story has it that the bagel, like *matzah* and so much else of Jewish culture, originated out of persecution. At the height of the Middle Ages, it is said, toward the end of the 9th century and the beginning of the 10th, when the intensification of religious feeling that was to culminate in the Crusades had begun to gather strength, many of the fervently religious of Christendom began to place a special importance on the connection between bread and the person of Jesus Christ. Because Christ had incarnated himself in the bread of the Holy Eucharist, it was felt by the more intolerantly pious that bread had a peculiarly sacred connection with Christianity, and that the Jews, who rejected Christ, should therefore be denied its use. So, the legend goes on, a great deal of agitation was stirred up by anti-Semites, and in many provinces Jews who attempted to brave the situation by openly buying or baking bread were set upon by mobs, stoned, and beaten. But one little duchy in an out of the way corner of Prussia was ruled over by a good duke, and when this persecution began to afflict the Jews of his district, they decided to lay their cause before their ruler. He, the story goes, being a humane man, cast about for some solution, and, having taken counsel with his advisers, announced that it had been ruled that only what was *baked* could properly be called bread. The Jews promptly took the hint, and departed to seek out a way to prepare wheat without baking. What they decided on was boiling, and what resulted was the first batch of bagels ever made. In the beginning the boiled product was only "toasted" a little; gradually, however, when things had quieted down, it began to be both boiled and baked.

THAT is the legend. The truth, probably, is that bagels first began to be made in Russia. It is from that country, and from Bessarabia, that most of the skilled bagel-makers now in America came, and the tradition of bagel production and consumption has a much longer history there than can be traced anywhere else. In Russia, too, bagels were popular with wide sections of the non-Jewish population, although making them was almost entirely a Jewish industry, and they had even come to be bound up with non-Jewish group life in a way that would seem odd to an American Jew: during the Russian Christmas season it used to be the custom for groups of children to roam from house to house, as they do here

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on Hallowe'en and Thanksgiving, singing and receiving gifts; and, oldtime bagel-makers remember nostalgically, the demand for bagels always took a long jump just before the Christmas season, because, along with nuts and candy, it was bagels that the children were given as gifts. Whether the custom still survives is hard to say; after the 1917 Revolution the Communists put a complete stop to the production of bagels, on the ground that they were a luxury, and whether it has been revived since no one seems to know.

Of course, the Russian version was a little different from the Sunday morning bagel that has become familiar in America. It was much larger, for one thing, often as much as a foot in diameter, and it was made to last for months, rather like hardtack. A bagel was a good thing to take on long sea voyages in those days, but not much good with cream cheese and lox.

That may be one of the reasons why, in the Jewish life of Eastern Europe, bagels were traditionally eaten before Tisha B'av, the commemoration of a historic day of misfortune for the Jewish people. On that day, according to tradition, the Temple fell, and on that day also Bar Kochba's rebellion was finally crushed; it used to be the custom for Jews to eat a bagel, or an egg—something round, because roundness was symbolic of mourning—on the eve of Tisha B'av, sprinkling whatever was eaten with ashes, to keep the taste of bitterness in their mouths through the day of fasting. But bagels were eaten also on Lag B'omer, a happier holiday.

Who first baked a bagel in America, and when and where the happy event took place, is something else that will presumably remain a pleasant mystery forever. It used to be said in Yiddish, as an expression of contempt for pretended skill or mystery, *"Ai, vos? Men nemt a teigel un men macht a bagel"* ("So what? You take a lump of dough and you make a bagel"). But bagel-making really is a skilled craft, as yet almost untouched by machine techniques, and it couldn't have been done by just anyone. Probably there were a few skilled bagel bakers in the first great waves of immigration from Eastern Europe that washed over America in the 1890's; it was shortly after that date, anyhow, that bagels made their debut on American soil. Most of the skilled bagel bakers now practicing their craft in New York came here in the early 1900's.

About that time bagels began to be made extensively in little two- or three-man cellar bakeries dotted around New York's East Side, some of which, though not many, are still in existence. The use of cellars for bagel-baking gave rise to a quip which is still remembered with indignation by old-timers in the bagel industry: it used to be said, if a man was in difficulties or generally unsuccessful and one was questioned about his fortunes: *"Er ligt in der erd un bakt bagel"* ("He lies underground and bakes bagels"). There is a further explanation of this saying in the fact that often, in these cellar bakeries, the oven was built so low that a pit two or three feet deep had to be dug in front of it for the man working the oven to stand in, so that he did, literally, "lie underground and bake bagels." But that doesn't, in the view of bagel bakers, excuse the injury done the fair name of their craft. Bagel-making is skilled and difficult work, and it takes a good deal of time to pick up the necessary techniques; it is also in most cases a family craft: there are men in some of New York's bakeries now who count themselves as the sixth generation of bagel bakers, working with skills handed down from father to son in an unbroken line of descent that reaches back beyond memory.

In spite of their resentment at the use of their craft as a synonym for poverty, bagel bakers who were working back in the 1900's do not deny that things were pretty tough for the workers in the industry then, and working conditions as bad as the quip implies. On the contrary, they are fond of recalling how bad things were in the old days and contrasting them with the better conditions of today. The improvement is due largely to their union, which now calls itself—with a slight shift of spelling for the benefit of Galitzianers—the International Beigel Bakers' Union, and which made its first attempt to organize in 1907. This attempt was not wholly successful until 1925, but today all the bakeries in New York are fully organized, and bagel bakers earn some of the highest wages in the industry.

There are, right now, between thirty and forty bagel bakeries in New York, scat-

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tered from the further marches of the Bronx all the way to Coney Island. A few are just across the river, in New Jersey. Otherwise, to the bagel fancier, the country presents the aspect of a desert whose bagel-making oases are few and pitifully far between. (One bakery in East New York is doing its best to mitigate the situation by shipping bagels to the rest of the country by air, but so far its operations have not been extensive enough to be significant.) Most of the bakeries employ only three or four skilled men, although a few of them are a good deal larger; but even the small ones are capable of turning out, on the average, about twenty thousand bagels a day.

At one such bakery in Williamsburg I made the acquaintance of a baker named Aaron Zlotnick, a sturdy, pleasant, and talkative man of about forty-five who began work when he was eleven and has been turning out bagels ever since. The place he works in is fairly roomy, as bagel bakeries go, since it employs six people, but it wouldn't give the owners of the Thousand Window Bakery much of a turn. As a matter of fact, it has only one window, a plate-glass store front on South First Street. Behind the window is a room about the size of an ordinary retail bakery, and furnished only with a counter, where bagels are sold fresh from the oven to people who want them that way. A good many do, apparently, because a steady trickle of customers came and went while I was there. Beyond this room is another and larger one in which the bagels are actually baked, a square, high-ceilinged, and clean-looking place with whitewashed walls.

I found Mr. Zlotnick in the back room engaged in twisting a long string of dough into one bagel after another. This, he told me later, is his specialty. A skilled man can do it at the rate of approximately thirty bagels a minute, or one bagel every two seconds; Zlotnick was running slightly better than that when I clocked him. He was standing in front of a flour-sprinkled table that ran along the side of the room, and before him was a huge lump of dough that must have weighed several hundred pounds. Usually the men who do this part of the job work in teams of two, one man cutting slices out of the mass of dough and forming it into long, perfectly proportioned strings, while his partner twists the strings into the little circles that form the bagels, snapping each one off with a precision and economy of movement that takes years to learn. Zlotnick prefers to work alone, and he has found that things go just as quickly.

As I watched him work, he told me a little about himself. He was born in Kiev and first began to practice his trade in that city, becoming the fourth generation of his family to do so. A cousin of his in Kiev who went to work at about the same time is now president of the Beigel Bakers' Union in America; *his* family used to bake bagels for the czar. After the Communists came around Zlotnick moved over into Bessarabia, but things weren't much better there, so, like a good many other bagel bakers, he decided to try the New World. His first stop was Toronto, from which, after a few years, he moved down to New York. Yes, he said, bagels were quite popular in Toronto. "But not in Connecticut," he added ruefully. "Too many Yankees." He tried to open a bagel bakery in Hartford some years ago, because it seemed to him that its considerable Jewish population could support one. "No go," he said, shaking his head. "They're all Yankees up there."

As he spoke he went on twisting his string of dough into bagels, his shoulder muscles moving steadily in a staccato, jerking rhythm. After twisting each one and snapping it from the string, he would give it a little rolling slap against the table and place it on a flat tray at his side. As each tray was filled he added it to a stack on the floor. "You know," he said, "I never earned a penny except by baking bagels." He nodded reflectively, and then grinned. "I don't say it's something to be proud of. You know, like this. It's just the truth."

Zlotnick is surprisingly young for such an old-timer in the trade, young enough, in fact, to have seen service in the army during the last war, when he was stationed in the South. He said, with perhaps a touch of professional exaggeration: "When they found out I was a baker, they asked me, the first thing, could I bake bagels. Texas. Imagine that."

There have been other afflictions besides the Bolsheviks to trouble the bagel-maker's horizon. One of these is the persistent rumor

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of a bagel machine like the ones used to stamp out doughnuts, which would of course promptly put a number of highly skilled craftsmen out of business. So far, however, nothing of the kind has materialized. And the bagel-makers do not seem very worried; of the several hundred who belong to the union, many are teaching the trade to younger members of their families. It used to be feared that the art of bagel-making would eventually be lost in the United States because of the reluctance of younger bakers to take the trouble to learn it, but since the war many young veterans have followed their fathers into the trade.

After the bagels have been formed they are allowed to stand, stacked up in their shallow boxes, for several hours. Then they are considered ready to be boiled and baked. Most evenings, Zlotnick told me, the bakers begin to put them through the oven at about seven o'clock, and go on working until two or three in the morning. On weekends, though, when the demand for bagels rises sharply, the oven is generally stoked up and ready to go by six. The night I was there I moved over to watch the baking at about six-thirty. There were two men running that end of things, one a short, broad-shouldered, quick-moving man who took care of the oven, and the other, his helper, in charge of the vat in which the bagels are boiled. This vat is a stone cauldron four feet wide that looks a little like a sunken bathtub, and it was bubbling merrily when I came over. The helper, a middle-aged man with a frowning, deeply-lined face, wearing a varicolored *yarmalke* that might once have been a jockey cap, was busily picking bagels up from a tray with his fingers, six at a time, and dumping them into his vat. He had been pointed out to me as the newest man in the place, a veteran of Buchenwald and Auschwitz who had only succeeded in getting to America three months before. Once in a while he would pick up a flat paddle about two feet long and stir his bathtub vigorously. The bagels are boiled for about eight minutes. At the end of that time they are fished out with a net and dumped on a long trough set up alongside the vat. Then the master baker takes over.

While the first batch of bagels was boiling he had been swabbing out the oven with a cloth tied to the end of a pole that looked about fifteen feet long. This was to take off the "top heat," he told me, and if he didn't do it the bagels would come out black instead of brown. When he had cooled things off to his own satisfaction, he laid the pole aside and took down from two hooks suspended from the ceiling a long, thin wooden plank, known in the trade as a "peel." He laid this down alongside the trough, and began to line up the glistening white bagels on it, picking up six bagels at a time as the vat man had done, three in each hand. At each end of the trough was a large bowl of coarse salt, and as he came to it he dipped both handfuls into the bowl so that a segment of each bagel was covered with salt. When he had a whole row lined up he shoved the plank through the hinged door of the oven. After a few minutes he slid the plank back out and ran a piece of heavy string under the bagels down the whole length of the plank, to loosen them from the wood. Then he put his peel back in the oven and turned it sideways, dumping the bagels off in a long straight line. The purpose of the plank is to give the bagels time to dry, so that they won't stick to the floor of the oven.

After that, he repeated the process at intervals of a few minutes, each time moving the long lines of bagels already in the oven a little further from left to right, and turning them over from time to time with a tremendously long paddle. Once I bent down to peer into the oven as he slid a new batch through the door. The first batch was over at the far right now, and they looked crisp and brown. A minute later, the baker picked them up on his paddle and slid them out of the oven. He looked at them for a minute with an expression of judicious satisfaction, then pointed his paddle at a wicker bin that stood next to the oven and let the bagels slide into it. They looked good enough to eat without cream cheese.

I went over to take a closer look, and the baker interrupted his work for a moment to watch me.

"Try one," he said encouragingly. "That can't hurt you, a bagel. After all, every one is cooked twice."

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CEDARS OF LEBANON

RULES FOR THE HOUSE OF STUDY

An 18th-Century Religious Document

THE study group which young Moses Hayyim Luzzatto founded in Padua, the regulations of which are here presented in a translation prepared for Schocken Books (the original Hebrew text was published by Simon Ginzburg in *The Life and Works of Moses Hayyim Luzzatto*, Philadelphia, 1931), was actually a community of mystics. One among them drew up these rules, and the text indicates that the members of the group—some older than their leader Luzzatto—had more in mind than the study of the Zohar. Uninterrupted study and a saintly conduct of life aimed at "the restoration of the Divine Presence and . . . of all Israel."

Moses Hayyim Luzzatto, born in Padua in 1707, is considered a forerunner of modern Hebrew secular poetry. In his lyric and dramatic verse, Luzzatto—who was well acquainted with Italian literature—employs purely human motifs: the beauty of nature, love, friendship; his language is clear and simple, and his style is free from the rigid forms of the past. Yet it should not be forgotten that the essence of Luzzatto's life was mysticism. The day came when Luzzatto forsook almost entirely his poetic work to devote himself to the passionate study of Cabala. Luzzatto was attracted by Isaac Luria's doctrine of *tikkun*, the mystical process of "restoration" that heals the broken, imperfect state of our life and effects a return of all things to their original contact with God. It was the Lurianic Cabala that prepared the way for both the pseudo-Messianism of Sabbatai Zevi in the 17th century and the Hasidic religious revival of the 18th. Luzzatto stands between these two movements, daring to be a mystic after the collapse of the Sabbatianic heresy, and in many ways anticipating some basic tenets of Hasidism (e.g., the central and redemptive position of the religious leader, the *zaddik*, in the community).

Luzzatto was more than a student of mysticism and skillful popularizer of Cabala. Experiencing states of mystical ecstasy, he—it is now assumed—must early have felt a call to initiate a new Messianic movement that should accomplish nothing less than the redemption of Israel and the world. A new "Book of Psalms" which he had composed in his youth was to be substituted for the original Davidic one—"when the Messiah comes." He ascribed his mystical writings to the inspiration of a voice from Heaven which revealed to him "hidden secrets of the Holy King."

It is intriguing to imagine what might have come of such a group if it had been permitted to grow and develop. But its life was cut short by the scholars of the time, led by the rabbis of Hamburg, Frankfort, and Venice, who saw in Luzzatto's thinking and in his activities a danger to middle-of-the-road Judaism. Luzzatto's manuscripts were confiscated, it was forbidden to read his writings, and he (not yet thirty) was enjoined by the rabbis against any further study of the Cabala until he should have reached the age of forty. Luzzatto left Padua to go to Amsterdam, where the Sephardic community welcomed the ostracized mystic and poet. In Amsterdam, Luzzatto supported himself by lens-cutting; here he wrote his *Mesillat Yesharim* ("Path of the Upright"), a work of classical Jewish ethics that avoids open references to Cabala without, however, abandoning his original mystic-Messianic position.

The approach of his fortieth year moved Luzzatto to leave Europe for Palestine: it was there he desired to resume his mystical studies and activities. But he did not live to be forty. He and his family died in the Holy Land shortly after their arrival, during a plague in 1746.—NAHUM N. GLATZER

WITH the help of God may we begin and prosper, amen.

These are the words of the covenant, the laws and ordinances and teachings, which the holy associates hereunto subscribing have taken upon themselves for the unification of the Holy One and the Divine Presence all acting as one, because "Jephthah

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in his generation is even as Samuel in his generation" *—to perform this service of God, which shall be reckoned to the account of all. The following are the obligations which they have accepted:

First, to prosecute in this House of Study a continuous uninterrupted study of the holy book of Zohar, each man his portion, one after another, daily, from the morning until the Evening Prayer, except for the Sabbaths, holy days, Purim, the Ninth of Av, the eve of the Ninth of Av, and except for the Friday afternoons, according to the condition which we have stipulated before God:

1. That this study shall not be reckoned a vow. That is to say, an omission shall not, God forbid, become a stumbling block to the comrades and be considered a default of a vow. But it shall be imposed upon them with all the power and stringency that mouth can utter and heart can feel.

2. That the study shall never be interrupted, and when one man takes the place of his comrade, he is to begin before his comrade has finished, so that the study shall never be interrupted.

3. If a comrade shall be absent on a journey, be it near or far, the remaining comrades shall complete his study, and it shall be reckoned to his account, as if he had studied with them.

4. This study shall not be performed for the purpose of receiving any reward, of whatever nature, not even, God forbid, in thought. But it is to be performed only for the purpose of the "restoration" of the Divine Presence, the "restoration" of all Israel, the people of the Lord, that they may bring joy to their Creator; this study shall entail no reward but the merit of doing more such deeds for the purpose of the unification of the Holy One and the Divine Presence and the "restoration" of all Israel.

5. If (God forbid!) it should happen that the study is interrupted in any manner, either through duress or error or forgetfulness, may such interruption produce no evil impression whatsoever, either on earth or on high. The object of the comrades in prosecuting this study is solely perfection, and not any iniquity whatsoever.

6. The general teachings of our teacher and master, Rabbi Moses Hayyim, which he teaches in the House of Study at noontime daily, may be reckoned as part of this study.

7. Each of the comrades may upon occasion honor one who does not belong to the holy brotherhood by allowing him to study in his place and at his hour; and it shall be considered as if it was one of the holy members doing the reading.

8. The comrades have also undertaken to combine day and night in this study.

9. This study may not be undertaken for the individual perfection of any one of the comrades, nor even in atonement for a sin; its sole meaning is the "restoration" of the Divine Presence, and the "restoration" of all Israel.

10. No one of the comrades shall be assigned any fixed hours for this study, but each shall study as his heart dictates, whenever he is able.

Those who have concluded this sure covenant subscribe hereunto: [signed] Israel Hezekiah Trevis, Isaac Marini, Yekutiel of Vilna, Jacob Israel Forte, Solomon Dina, Michael Terni, Jacob Hayyim Castel Franco.

THE following regulations are subjoined to the above, that the new comrades may serve God in truth and with a whole heart. The comrades have taken the following upon themselves:

1. They will perform their service before God in truth, with humility and perfect love, with no expectation of reward for themselves, but only for the sake of the "restoration" of the Divine Presence, and the "restoration" of all Israel. Any reward due them for their fulfillment of the commandments and their good deeds they offer up as a gift to all Israel, to show their love of the holy Presence, and to bring joy to their Creator.

2. The comrades have all united to serve their Creator as one man with a simple and a pure service; when any comrade fulfills any commandment, it shall be considered as fulfilled by all the comrades for the sake of the perfection of the holy Presence. But any sin or fault committed by any single comrade shall not be reckoned to the community at large. For the community has been formed to share perfection, not iniquity.

3. The comrades have taken upon themselves to love one another, and to treat one another kind-heartedly and with brotherly

*Talmud, Rosh Hashanah 25b. That is to say, the comrades are to be considered equal regardless of intellectual status.

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love, and to accept remonstrances from one another with great love, without anger or hate, but in a loving spirit and in a peaceful manner, so that they may be accepted before the Lord.

4. The comrades have undertaken to keep all the words of the Holy Book [the Zohar], which they have learned, a sealed secret, and to reveal nothing except with the permission of the master.

5. They shall all endeavor to come to the study of the Zohar every day at whatever hour they find it possible.

6. They are all under obligation to be present, unless detained by an accident, at the holy House of Study every Sabbath after the Afternoon Prayer for instruction by their master, may his light shine.

7. They shall make themselves resolute to perform their service before the Lord, and to pay heed neither to the jesting nor to the laughter of others.

8. The newly consecrated comrades have undertaken to leave the room without objections, in the event that the holy comrades who subscribed to the original regulations find it necessary to transact any business the nature of which cannot be revealed to others in the House of Study.

9. If any person wishes to join their company afterwards, all conditions hitherto obtaining among them shall apply to him as well.

10. The comrades shall guard their mouths and tongues from evil speech, and transact their affairs and fill their needs with all respect and reverence for the holy Presence. Far be it from them to treat lightly any stringent law or usage in Israel. But they will add observance to observance in their wish to remain pure before the Lord God of Israel.

The following are the signatures wherewith they subscribe to these regulations: [signed] Isaiah ben Joseph, Isaiah ben Abraham, Mordecai ben Rephael, Solomon ben Samuel, Moses ben Michael, Abraham ben Jacob, Isaac Hayyim ben Jacob Isaac Katz, Simeon ben Jacob Vita, Mordecai ben Benzion.

THESE are the statutes of this holy House of Study:

The comrades have taken it upon themselves to speak nothing but what concerns the Torah at the holy table of study of their master, Rabbi Moses Hayyim. Nor shall they linger in conversation in other houses of study, when the hour of study approaches, but they shall seat themselves at the table with reverence and awe. And Rabbi Israel, son of Rabbi Michael, one of the comrades who has been chosen for this special duty, is to raise his voice and announce: "Give glory to the Lord God of Israel!" Immediately the holy comrades are to bow their heads, and no further word is to escape their lips. They are required to break off their conversation and to remain silent in great awe. If the comrades engage in unnecessary talk, even if it is not the hour of study and they are not at the study table, Rabbi Yekutiel has the right to motion to Rabbi Israel, and Rabbi Israel shall say, "Give glory to the Lord God of Israel!" Then everyone is immediately required to fall silent. If quarrels should break out among the comrades (God forbid) even outside the House of Study, Rabbi Israel can bring any comrade to silence by saying to him, "Give glory to the Lord God of Israel!" —and the comrade must become silent. The other statutes dealing with silence are indeed written in the book of the covenant to which the comrades have subscribed with their own hands.

In their pursuit of saintly living the comrades have taken it upon themselves not to utter any idle word whatsoever anywhere in the whole House of Study. And they have further taken the following upon themselves:

Whenever any comrade shall come into this House of Study, his head should be bowed and he should give greeting with the words, "Let the glory of the Lord endure forever!" Then those sitting in the House of Study will reply, "Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth and forever!"

Whenever any comrade leaves the House of Study, he must go backwards, saying, "Praised be the Lord out of Zion!"

When the master Rabbi Moses Hayyim shall enter the House of Study, he shall say, "May the Lord our God be with us!" Then those sitting in the House of Study shall reply, "May the Lord give strength unto his people!"

When the master Rabbi Moses Hayyim shall seat himself at his table, he shall say, "The Lord is high above all nations," and the comrades shall reply, "Who is like unto

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the Lord our God, that dwelleth so high, that looketh down so low upon the heavens and the earth?" Then Rabbi Israel shall say, "Give glory to the Lord God of Israel!" and the comrades shall immediately bow their heads and fall silent, prepared to study before the holy Presence in fear and trembling and awe. Then Rabbi Yekutiel shall say to all the holy comrades, "Apply your minds!"

The comrades have also taken it upon themselves not to raise their voices in the holy House of Study in the course of their studies, even where they may, except for Talmudic dissertation. They have also taken it upon themselves to do nothing in the House of Study without the permission of their master, Rabbi Moses Hayyim, may his light shine.

Furthermore, all the holy comrades, both of the first company and of the second, have agreed to guard themselves closely against speaking any falsehoods, and to make it their endeavor to allow only truth to pass their lips, forever. Consequently, when one comrade shall say to another, "Speak the truth!" —it shall be considered the most binding oath possible.

The comrades have further taken it upon themselves that one of the comrades shall daily recite, first the Ten Commandments and then the Six Hundred and Thirteen Precepts, and then Psalm 119 from verse 9, "Wherewithal shall a young man keep his way pure," until the end of the section.

They have further taken it upon themselves to read all through the Bible, and some comrades all through the Mishnah, every month.

They have further taken it upon themselves to tithe their days before the Lord in fasting. Every tenth day shall be holy, and one of the comrades shall fast on that day. The comrades are all to fast in rotation.

Further they have taken it upon themselves to perform absolution of all reproaches and absolution of all ill will every month.

The comrades have further added to the regulation concerning the daily study of the holy Zohar the provision that they shall study all day until the sixth hour of the night, with the exception of the nights from the close of the Day of Atonement until after the Feast of Booths, and the nights of the fourteenth and the fifteenth of Adar, and also the nights from the day of preparation for the Passover festival until after the festival, and the nights from the day of preparation for the Feast of Weeks until after the festival. Nor are they to study during the nights preceding and following the fast days of the Seventeenth of Tammuz, the Ninth of Av, and the Day of Atonement. But if the requirements of the hour dictate the necessity of study, the decision is to lie in the hands of the master, Rabbi Moses Hayyim.

That which the comrades have taken upon themselves is for the purpose of perfection only, and not for any iniquity whatsoever. The comrade who sins shall bear his own guilt, and the collective holiness shall not suffer. And the comrades have subjoined that they shall not neglect the study of the Zohar even during the hour of general instruction by Rabbi Moses Hayyim.

The Lord has helped them to this point; may he nevermore forsake them, until the Messiah shall come whose coming is proper, unto whom "shall the gathering of the people be" (Gen. 49:10), as it is written, "For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve Him with one consent" (Zeph. 3:9); "and the Lord shall be King over all the earth; in that day shall the Lord be One, and His name one" (Zech. 14:9).

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ON THE HORIZON

ISRAEL'S MUSICAL AMBASSADORS

The American Tour of the Israel Philharmonic

CHEMJO VINAVER

FIFTY-FIVE concerts of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra—Israel's most impressive item of "cultural export" to date—in American cities throughout the land have given us the opportunity to draw up a kind of trial balance on at least one major arm of culture in the Jewish state.

The first public appearances of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, in Carnegie Hall (January 13 and 14), were red-letter events, sold out in advance even at the increased prices for tickets. The orchestra had received high praise, but those grown skeptical of publicity paeans wondered. After all, the Israel Philharmonic is a young organization, and in its fourteen years of existence it has lived in continual crisis. It has never had a permanent conductor, and while this may develop an orchestra's flexibility and adaptability, there is no substitute for an expert leader's steady guidance.

Delightfully, most doubts were dispelled as soon as there issued forth the magnificent sound of the strings in the opening measures of the first concert. Unhappily, however, the program of the evening was hardly designed to enable any solid appraisal of the orchestra. With Serge Koussevitzky in charge of a predominantly Russian program (Prokofiev's Fifth and Tchaikovsky's Fourth Symphony), together with a brief selection from the First Symphony of the Israeli composer Ben Haim, one was practically assured of an expert reading of the scores executed with the virtuosity and polish of instrumental effects which is Mr. Koussevitzky's hallmark. Beyond this one could discover only that the orchestra was capable of following the exacting demands of the American conductor with technical competence and cultivated musicianship.

The program of the second concert, conducted by Leonard Bernstein, promised a fuller revelation: the Mozart Symphony No. 36 (the "Linzer"), Schumann's Second Symphony, and the "Song of Praise" for viola and orchestra by the Israeli composer Oedon Partos. Unfortunately, this last was replaced by Carlos Chavez's "Sinfonia India" at the concert. As against the first concert, the orchestra did not respond well to the conductor's wishes, perhaps owing to his tendency to devote his main attention to the first violins at the expense of the other sections. Thus at times the required *sforzandos* and *decrescendos* were not provided unanimously by the entire body. More convincing than the somewhat pale rendition of the Mozart symphony was a vigorous performance of the "Sinfonia India" and a really rewarding rendition of the Schumann Second.

THE recent coast-to-coast tour of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra was one of the important events of the past musical season. CHEMJO VINAVER, distinguished musical scholar and leader of the highly esteemed Vinaver Chorus, here discusses the orchestra's musicianship and the repertoire of music it presented to the American public, in the context of its history and the special interest that attends the developing cultural institutions of the emerging Israeli society. Mr. Vinaver was born in Warsaw in 1900, and received his musical education in Germany. He is now at work on an anthology of Ashkenazic music. Mr. Vinaver's article "Alas for Jewish Folk Songs!" appeared in our January issue.

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These concerts evoked extraordinary enthusiasm from those who had come primarily for the music as well as from those brought by sentimental or patriotic ardor. Generally, the orchestra's technical and artistic standards are high, with its excellent string choir the strongest asset: the first violins are capable of an almost singing eloquence, and there is a noble sonority in the sound of its cello section and a nice quality to its woodwinds and brasses. As to its second violins and double basses, the impression received at both hearings was that they were of inadequate proportion to the string body.

Surprisingly, only a single, rather fleeting tribute was paid to Israeli music at the Israel Philharmonic's first two New York concerts: Ben Haim's "Psalm for Orchestra," the slow movement of his First Symphony. Brief as it was, it proved an auspicious introduction to the composer's orchestral works (some of his choral pieces had been heard here previously). Ben Haim is one of the foremost members of the "Eastern Mediterranean" school of composers in Israel, a group which aims to create music embodying indigenous qualities of the Oriental chant and expressive of the pastoral character of the Israeli landscape. Raised in the Western musical tradition (Ben Haim was originally born Paul Frankenburger in Germany, where he received his education and musical training), the composer has been searching for a link with the melodic heritage of the East. His "Psalm" employs elements of the prayer chant traditional with Persian Jews in the reciting of Psalm 121. The noble calm and beauty of this ancient melos manifested itself with the first sounding of the broad theme, played in unison by the strings. Both in his choice and in his discriminating treatment of this material, Ben Haim is guided by rare intuition, all the more remarkable in a newcomer to the melodic expression of the East. Much in the traditional manner of distributing the portions of a psalm between the prayer leader (*baal tefillah*) and the congregation, the first chanting each verse and the latter providing the responses, the composer has assigned the "chanting" of the theme to one part of the orchestra, while the other sections provide the accompaniment in the character of the murmured "responses," with the quality of the latter vividly brought out by the woodwinds.

This piece with its fine restraint and lucid instrumentation should go a long way toward refuting the unfounded legend—current among less explorative composers—that the Semitic-Oriental chant is unsuited to polyphonic treatment. Music of this caliber, which so naturally absorbs and reflects the echoes of our musical past, indicates the road that may lead to a distinctive Israeli musical idiom. To be sure, it may take a good while for a spontaneous, authentic utterance to replace the conscious striving for continuity with our melodic heritage: but history teaches us to be patient.

In view of this promise, one cannot help voicing disappointment that more composers of Israel were not heard at the crucial first concerts, which naturally received the most extensive reviews, and on the basis of which the orchestra was evaluated. Having for years suffered the maudlin performances and recordings of imported "Israeli music," with their gross misrepresentations of Israeli musical creativity, one had anticipated at last a fair sampling of the true home-grown product, authoritatively presented by the natural emissary of that music, Israel's national orchestra. However, the powers that be (whoever they were) evidently had decided (possibly to cater to the presumed music prejudices of the critics) to remain within the bounds of the standard concert repertory. If so, they outmaneuvered themselves: to Olin Downes of the New York *Times,* the presence of the one brief snatch of Israeli music was "the most interesting fact of all about this concert." And Virgil Thomson of the *Herald Tribune* asked: "Has Israel no confidence in its own conductors? Or in its own music? Whenever a French or British or Italian orchestra is heard in New York, its programs and its playing reflect musical attitudes a little different from ours. . . . Bringing a whole orchestra from Tel Aviv to America just to offer these excellent artists in their familiar repertory is surely carrying perfume to Paris. . . . I cannot believe that at home its programs and playing have not some special flavor of their own."

"Some special flavor of their own." In music it is the same as elsewhere. It is not failing to be what we are not that we

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must fear, but rather failing to be what we were meant to be. Rabbi Meir of Apt said: "When in the world-to-come I face my Final Judge, I do not fear lest he reproach me: 'Why haven't you been Abraham our Patriarch?' or 'Why haven't you been Moses our Teacher?' I only fear that he might ask me, 'Why haven't you been Rabbi Meir of Apt?'"

Actually, it was rather close to this spirit that the idea of "an orchestra of one's own" was originally conceived. The Israel Philharmonic Orchestra began, quite properly, as a utopian dream. Its founder, Bronislaw Huberman, the distinguished violinist who died in Switzerland in 1947, envisioned this orchestra as a cultural emissary rather than a mere instrument for serving the musical needs of its country. "Some day," he wrote in his outline of the project, "I hope to send an artistic message abroad from here."

Huberman was himself no political Zionist: what first suggested the idea of the Palestine Symphony Orchestra to him was the passionate devotion to music he encountered in Palestine while on a concert tour of the Near East. Not that he was unaccustomed to the most extravagant public acclaim: Brahms had hailed him as a genius at the time he was a thirteen-year-old prodigy, and later the musical world everywhere followed suit. Yet the musical enthusiasm of the *Yishuv* surpassed all this by far. I remember a Huberman concert before a typical Palestine audience during the season of 1927-28. The concert took place in a barn-like structure, carrying the ambitious title of "Exhibition Hall," on the outskirts of Tel Aviv. The audience, many of them *halutzim* in their blue shirts, filled it to the last corner, and literally hung from the rafters and stood on the roof. The heat was unbearable, yet there was absolute silence. Outside, hundreds besieged the hall. The inevitable noise created by the numbers outside, and the creaking of the rooftop under the weight of the music lovers, destroyed what was left of the "acoustics." Huberman had to interrupt his performance repeatedly. As might be expected, he was rather perturbed at all this, but at the same time he was openly moved by the patience and spirit of those music-mad people. Indeed, Huberman, though brought up in a home estranged from Jewish tradition, was deeply aware (as I had occasion to discover years later in New York) of the power latent in this collective Jewish worship of music, art, and things of the spirit—a phenomenon which might well be a modern manifestation of Hasidic fervor in a secularized generation.

It was not until 1936 that the projected orchestra came into being. Shortly before that time, its founder had distinguished himself by his uncompromising rejection of proffered Nazi concessions. In 1934, following the removal of Jewish artists, he was invited by Conductor Wilhelm Furtwaengler of the Berlin Philharmonic to return to the German concert stage. Huberman rose to the occasion with an unforgettable answer, his "Open Letter to Furtwaengler," first published by the Swiss *Neue Zuericher Zeitung*. Huberman's "best answer to Hitler," however, to use his own words, was the creation of the Palestine orchestra. The nucleus for this ensemble came from the ranks of Jewish musicians expelled from German orchestras. These musicians—most of them accomplished instrumentalists at home in the European musical tradition—were trained and welded together by the brilliant German Jewish conductor Hans-Wilhelm Steinberg (now William Steinberg, conductor of the Buffalo Symphony Orchestra). In December 1936, Toscanini conducted the inaugural concert of the Palestine Symphony Orchestra in Tel Aviv.

In the course of fourteen years of existence, the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra—as it is called now—has become part and parcel of Israel's cultural life. Each of its subscription concerts has to be repeated several times. In Tel Aviv alone there are 7,000 subscribers to its concerts, and on special occasions neither Ohel-Shem hall nor the Habimah Theater building is large enough to hold all. A subscription to the Philharmonic is considered among the necessities of life by many Israelis. One poet, recently robbed of all his possessions, complained in the press, "Most of all, I miss my subscription to the Philharmonic."

At the close of their tour of the United States and Canada, the Israel Philharmonic returned to New York for two farewell concerts at Carnegie Hall under the direction of Leonard Bernstein, and an addi-

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tional concert at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. On March 18 New Yorkers finally heard Oedon Partos's "Song of Praise," concerto for viola and orchestra. Mr. Partos, born and educated in Hungary, has been the leader of the orchestra's viola section since 1938, and his playing of the viola solo of his composition was delightful in its skill, subtlety, and excellent musicianship. The work itself proved a noteworthy piece of Israeli music. Consisting of a Symphonic Prelude, Variations, and an Epilogue on a theme from the Prelude, it is written in a somewhat conservative style, yet the music is expressive of a distinct individuality. Western influences are knowingly fused with those of the Orient, the color and mood of Eastern sacred and folk melos becoming perceptible throughout, manifesting themselves rather in spirit than in letter, but with inspiring impact.

Two more works by Israeli composers were presented at Carnegie Hall the following night, on a program which included Mendelssohn's "Italian" symphony and the "Eroica" by Beethoven. "Legend and Dance for Strings," by Josef Kaminski, turned out to be a rather poor piece of music; Mark Lavry's "Emek" revealed itself as a somewhat more successful work—a symphonic poem in the popular Oriental vein, it was reminiscent of the works of such 19th-century composers as Ippolitov-Ivanov and Noskovski.

To the American Fund for Israel Institutions, which helps support the orchestra, goes the credit for having made the first American visit possible. There would have been one more cause for gratitude if the sponsoring organization had cast the orchestra's publicity in a key somewhat more appropriate to the cultural occasion. In the souvenir booklet one finds side by side with appropriate information, such as program notes written in a refreshingly factual style by Peter Gradenwitz, pages filled with tributes in gushing schoolgirl manner, e.g., "To the [Israel] Orchestra music is a provocation of the soul, like the morning roses of eternity" or "Music is the machine that manufactures love." The verbal genuflections to the "high priest" and "preacher" Sol Hurok, the impresario managing the tour, were in the worst possible taste. But then this is all of a piece with the fumbling second-rateness and short-range commercialism that still characterize so many phases of cultural liaison between Israel and America. Here, too, time will undoubtedly work improvement, but the process remains exasperatingly slow.

So, happy as we are with these first concerts, we would voice the hope that on its next tour the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra will be presented to the American public in a style befitting a great musical institution rather than a Madison Square Garden charity benefit, and that it be permitted to act as a bolder and more distinctive representative of the culture of Israel, playing more of Israel's own music, under its own conductors.

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THE STUDY OF MAN

THE MIND OF MAN: SOVIET VIEW

"Normal" and "Abnormal" in the USSR

ROBERT GORHAM DAVIS

IN 1946 the Central Committee of the Russian Communist party called upon Soviet psychology "to expose the reactionary character of psychological theories now current in America and Western Europe, to free itself of all harmful foreign influences and to imbue its scientific work with a true Bolshevik spirit." This call, naturally, did not go unheeded. The Logic and Psychology Department of the Academy of Social Sciences obediently organized a full-dress denunciatory examination of S. L. Rubinshtein's Soviet textbook, *Foundations of General Psychology,* which had come out in a revised edition in 1946. Until then Rubinshtein had been considered the leading Soviet psychologist, and the few accounts of Soviet psychology in American publications during the 40's had been based chiefly on his work. But now—in the familiar McCarthy manner—Rubinshtein was thoroughly exposed as a rotten compromiser with bourgeois psychology, a polluter of Soviet science with "reactionary idealist rubbish."

As compared to the silencing of Akhmatova and Zoshchenko in literature in 1946, or to the public humiliation of the "Weissmannist-Morganist" opponents of Lysenko in biology in 1948, Rubinshtein's misfortunes attracted practically no attention in this country. American intellectuals had little interest in Soviet psychology because they supposed—rightly, the attacks on Rubinshtein show—that Soviet psychology as such hardly existed. Marxists have always been very suspicious of individual psychology. It encourages, they feel, egotism, subjectivism, idealism, and biologism; it considers the individual apart from society or supposes that the basic patterns of individual development are the same in all societies. "Marxism," J. B. S. Haldane wrote in his *Marxist Philosophy and the Sciences,* in 1939, "has extremely little positive to say about the individual mind." Society and nature, Marxists observe, are prior to the individual and vastly greater. They provide both the content and forms of his thought. Every hour of the day external reality, with its rewards and punishments, tests or modifies the character of his thinking. Human consciousness is a social product; it has developed through social experience; it manifests itself to others through social acts; it can be significantly changed only through changes in social relations.

For Marxians, individual acts can be profitably considered only in terms of their social consequences and social origins. A man's own notions of why he behaves as he does are bound to be wrong unless he is a scientific socialist, in which case his motives are not individual or subjective. The wrongness of

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WHAT can be the function and character of the sciences of psychology and psychiatry in a society where peace of mind is an obligation of citizenship, and where psychological conflicts and their expression are administratively resolved by fiat, occupational and legal penalties, and, if necessary, shooting? Through the documentation offered by a recent authoritative work, *Soviet Psychiatry* by Joseph Wortis (Baltimore, The Williams and Wilkins Company, 314 pp., $5.00), ROBERT GORHAM DAVIS here offers a glimpse into one of the arcana of Soviet science. Mr. Davis is associate professor of English at Smith College, and has written for many general and professional periodicals. He was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1908, and studied at Harvard.

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the non-socialist sense of the self, and of the self's motives and values, is not individual either, but results from ideology, from the unconscious rationalization, as Engels believed, of class interests. "Morals, religion, metaphysics, and other ideology, together with their accompanying forms of consciousness," Marx and Engels wrote in *The German Ideology*, "therefore no longer present an appearance of independence. They have no history, no development of their own." Bourgeois thinkers could be conscious both of social conditions and of ideas, but not of the way social conditions determined ideas. Truer consciousness of these relations could arise only out of the collective struggle to change conditions. A man could see how conditions determined his ideas only by becoming a scientific socialist—but then he would no longer have the same ideas.

JOSEPH WORTIS'S book *Soviet Psychiatry* is the first full American account, based on a wide reading of the Russian texts, of Soviet theory and practice in psychology. One turns to it eagerly, then, to find answers to the psychological questions that still remain even if one accepts—as Dr. Wortis himself does—the basic Marxist assumptions. What measure of autonomy or independence do we still grant the individual psyche or organism in its dialectical give and take with the external world? Does the uniquely determining history, even though it is a social history, of each individual give him a unique pattern of responses to the external world (his personality), which can be understood—and if ill, cured—only in terms of the dynamics of his particular development? What part in this dynamic development of the individual do the mechanisms observed in depth psychology play: introjections, projections, displacements of affect, unacknowledged wishes, regressions, repressions, symbolic actings-out, and the like?

What Dr. Wortis says in the beginning of his book about the dialectic would make one suppose such notions have a place, that ideas of ambivalence, regression, and displacement are perfectly Pavlovian. Dialectically, he says, "opposing forces are always found within single phenomena. Negative and positive, new and old, growing and declining. . . . Interaction between these opposing qualities is part of the movement of natural things and explains their peculiarities of development. From this point of view excitation and inhibition are attributes of reflex activity and serve to explain the phenomena. . . ."

But since Dr. Wortis's book is a thoroughly "party-partisan" book, he devotes his appendix largely to the attacks on Rubinshtein, since these attacks represent the latest official pronouncements on psychology. And here the questions I raised are answered with appalling and very undialectical finality. The individual psyche is to be granted no independence, no autonomy whatsoever. As with the forms of art and the biologic transmission of inherited characteristics, the human mind is denied any principles of self-determination, any organic integrity, any characteristic functional patterns which permit it, even temporarily, to resist outside pressures or to isolate itself—or any part of itself—as a necessary condition of its development. In itself undialectic, this dogmatism is a response to the historic dialectic of the struggle with the West. The leaders of the Soviet Union cannot stand the idea that there is anything in art, nature, or the human mind within their realms that is not totally responsive to immediate political demands. They have orthodox sanctions for their position, furthermore, in that scornful semantic nightmare, Lenin's *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, which historic misfortunes have made the basic text in formal philosophy for a third of the world's population, and which sets the tone for Communist intellectual polemics.

THE attacks on Rubinshtein are important—crude, blustering, and dogmatic though they are—because they establish very clearly a controlling pattern. Art, philosophy, science, and politics do not exist by themselves. They are human activities. But what is the nature of the human being who creates them? The definitions of the socialist psyche given by Rubinshtein's critics make much more understandable the logic of "socialist realism" in the arts, or the special relation in Soviet philosophy of social determinism to individual moral responsibility, or the justification for the complete break with the West in the social and natural sciences. One must be grateful to Dr. Wortis for printing in full Chernakov's critique of Rubinshtein, "Against Idealism and Metaphysics in Psychology," even though it is bound to destroy most of the sympathy with Soviet science which his book attempts to create.

The basic Marxist psychological formula, repeated frequently by Wortis and Chernakov,

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is a simple one: the psyche is a function of highly organized matter, is brain activity which reflects social or material reality. From this, everything follows. In a pre-socialist society where there are class conflicts, the psyche reflects conflicts; integration is impossible, there are divisions in the soul. In a socialist society there are no class conflicts, and no distinction between individual and social interests—hence no psychic reflection of conflicts, but peace of soul. And in socialist art there is none of the ambiguities or ambivalences to which bourgeois criticism, reflecting its own situations, gives primary importance.

The psyche's reflection of reality is not a simple mirror reflection, however. Psychic phenomena, Chernakov says, "are ideal images, copies, or photographs, the correctness of which is tested and confirmed by practice." An ordinary mirror reflection corresponds to 18th-century empiricism or vulgar materialism or, in literature, to critical or descriptive realism: it does not correspond to "socialist realism." "The writer can give a truthful and profound portrayal of reality in its revolutionary development," a Soviet critic has written, "only if he is guided by the policy of the Soviet state. For on what is this policy based? On the knowledge of the real requirements for the development of the material life of society; on a precise, scientific knowledge of reality and its laws."

The psyche of a socialist citizen may give a distorted reflection of "real reality" for one of two reasons. His brain may not be functioning properly, in which case medical or surgical treatment is necessary. Or he may not have been active enough as a Communist to keep up with the advancing "party-partisan" sense of reality, which truly understands reality exactly in proportion to its success in dominating it. And it is up to the leaders to see that he keeps up, by initiating periodic purges and changes of line in the various arts and sciences. By the laws of dialectics, who does not go forward, goes backwards, and falls into servile acquiescence to bourgeois ideas.

Since the psyche is purely a reflection of objective social reality, according to Chernakov, and since social reality in a classless society is totally different from what had gone before, the Soviet psyche is necessarily totally different from the bourgeois or feudal one. "The object of Professor Rubinshtein's study," Chernakov says contemptuously, "is not Soviet man, who lives under social-economic conditions different from those of capitalist society, but some abstract human personality in general which is so dearly loved by all bourgeois psychologists." Moreover, since understanding in psychology as in other arts and sciences grows out of the Communist struggle to change nature and society, and since the Soviet state has advanced by a revolutionary leap so far beyond capitalist society, Soviet psychologists can learn nothing from bourgeois ones. Western psychologists who support the West against the Soviet Union inevitably reflect this anti-Sovietism and anti-Marxism in their psychological theories. And since no ideas are politically neutral, Soviet psychologists who accept Western concepts are held to be—in objective fact—acting as agents of the enemy. And since emotions, too, according to Chernakov, are reflections of reality, of social danger, for instance, and since morality is a matter of social consequence, the wrathful moral indignation with which people like Rubinshtein are denounced is felt to be perfectly consistent with a belief in determinism.

Those Western psychologists are considered most dangerous who seem closest to Soviet psychology in their mode of approach. "Psychosomatic medicine abroad, particularly in America," an academician named Bykov said at the Pavlov Centennial Discussions in 1950, "where monopoly capitalism is demonstrating its expansionist tendencies in the most brazen manner, has been forced to defend the interests of the ruling class with all the most reactionary theories at its disposal. The mouthpiece of those reactionary theories is the *American Journal of Psychosomatic Medicine*." What was reactionary, for Bykov, was the idea of man as motivated by instincts and aggressive impulses which are, to a considerable extent, repressed by society, but thereby intensified and made the breeding ground for neuroses.

Rubinshtein was accused of having similar ideas. He had been guilty of writing: "Actually it is not only the intellect that plays a part in man's psyche, and in the motives of human behavior—far from it: an essential part is also played by drives and emotional tendencies which often come into sharp conflict with the consciousness of man, and in influencing his behavior give rise to severe upheavals." The dialectical materialist, on the contrary, according to Chernakov, "must without any reservation acknowledge that the psyche is a reflec-

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tion of the outside world." Rubinshtein had also written: "The consciousness of a concrete living person—consciousness in the psychological and not in the ideological sense of the word—is always as though submerged in a dynamic, not quite assimilated experience, which creates a more or less dimly illuminated background with changeable and indefinite contours, from which consciousness emerges, without ever breaking away from it." For Chernakov such a description "drags into Soviet psychology a theory borrowed entirely from Freud, Lewin, and other no less reactionary bourgeois idealist psychologists, the so-called theory of the unconscious mind which, despite the clever device of mentioning the 'organic substratum' still remains completely mystic."

It is intolerable to suppose that Soviet workers go around with a lot of anti-social ideas in their unconscious. In the Soviet Union, therefore, the unconscious does not exist.

BY ATTRIBUTING an organic origin to emotional and voluntary processes, by stressing the organic rather than the social nature of human feelings, by talking about "drives," Rubinshtein is guilty of coming "close to the Weismannist-Morganist attempts to separate the organism from its surrounding world, to minimize the role of outside factors and to see the source of evolution only in internal factors." Chernakov insists again and again that feelings or emotions, volitions, aspirations, desires, are all conscious reflections of objective reality. Some of these may derive from inner organic needs, but the wish or aim is always conscious and always directed toward reality. "A drive for food cannot come before the sensation of hunger or appear independently of it, otherwise it would amount to mysticism. . . . Our feelings or emotions cannot be non-objective or non-conscious. It is impossible to feel or to experience an unknown something. It is impossible to love or hate an unknown someone for an unknown something." The fact that this impossibility can be empirically observed does not make it any the less impossible for Chernakov, just as certain empirically observable social circumstances in the Soviet Union are impossible subjects for "socialist realism."

Rubinshtein had so retained a concept of individual responsibility, had so far compromised with bourgeois idealism and mysticism, that he even spoke of "personal convictions" in relation to social obligations and norms. "Otherwise," he said, "the acceptance of social norms on the part of the individual would be a complete formality." The individual "must himself decide what to do, so that his actions would be in accordance with his personal convictions." Rubinshtein hastened to explain that he was not speaking "of subjecting the phenomena of social significance to control by the phenomena of particular and personal significance," but of "the fact that the personal convictions of man, once they become permeated with a socially significant content, thereby perforce become the arbiters of what is obligatory." For Chernakov this is abstract and irresponsible rubbish. He rejects the concepts both of the obligatory and of personal morality. "Ideals as an expression of the obligatory as distinct from the desirable do not and cannot exist in reality." To agree to this, of course, would be to admit the possible existence of a conflict between personal and social interests or desires. And as for personal morality: "It is possible to rise above the bourgeois morality of capitalist society only by using as a basis the morality of the most progressive class—the proletariat. But no matter how much one desires to do so, it is impossible to rise above proletarian morality, because there is no other more progressive than that." For Chernakov personal convictions *as such* can only be false or reactionary; true convictions reflect objective reality, and not the person who holds them.

THE whole weight of this logic is obviously directed against any concepts of individuality or personality. Such concepts simply cannot exist in a Marxian society. This situation is parallel to the problem of individuality for Aristotelian scholastics like Thomas Aquinas. In this doctrine, the "accidents" of individuality occurred only as the perfect "form"—the only "reality"—was imperfectly realized because of the resistance of "matter." In Soviet psychology, ideal reality—Communist reality—corresponds to the scholastic form, and it is reflected alike in all minds except as the material brain reflects it imperfectly.

This, too, is perfectly orthodox if one remembers Engels' definition of the "leap to freedom" which comes with the organization of a socialist society. In a class society, according to Engels, no one's will is free because it is in conflict with other wills. Men do not make their own history. "History makes itself in such a way that the final result always arises from

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conflicts between many individual wills, of which each again has been made what it is by a host of particular conditions of life." In a class society history works unconsciously, Engels says, and without volition. "For what each individual wills is obstructed by everyone else, and what emerges is something no one willed."

But a socialist society is free, that is, rationally controllable through the scientific recognition of necessity, since there is no conflict of wills. All wills reflect the same reality, not the mere empirical reality of vulgar materialism or bourgeois literary "realism," but "party-partisan" reality revealed to the most advanced leaders politically in the course of their struggle to change society. To introduce any principles of indeterminacy, therefore, as Rubinshtein did by suggesting that there could be significant individual choice based on personal conviction, is to destroy freedom. This identification of freedom with the total negation of any indeterminacy or spontaneity is the consistent governing principle behind "socialist realism" in literature, single-slate elections in politics, Michurinism in genetics, and the reflection-of-reality theory in psychology.

STILL, something does go on inside the individual. How does Soviet psychology get from the experimental physiology of neural reactions to the processes of rational cognition and to the logic and modes of thinking which are the presuppositions of all science? How does it structurally relate the two parts of the standard Soviet definition of mind: that it is a function of highly organized matter and that it reflects objective reality? The semantics of the word *reflection* are never discussed. The first part of the definition refers to Pavlovian reflexes—reflexes of an organic, not a mirror-image kind—and the second part refers to Chernakov's "ideal images, copies, or photographs." The passages cited in Dr. Wortis's book deal with this question only in a general and mostly political way.

Obviously, one wishes to say in protest against these generalizations, the developing psyche of the child does not reflect all of reality at once, but only the realities of nursing, of diaper-changes, etc. Its first reflections of social realities are of the restricted and particular social realities of its particular family circumstances. These early experiences create conditioned organic responses, resulting from associations of similarity or contiguity, emotional associations which provide the metaphors and metonymies, the ambivalences and symbolic transferences of poetry and religion. Freud examined these associations subjectively through analysis; Pavlov created something like them experimentally in his dogs. As the child develops into the man, becomes more mature, more conscious, more fully human, he is always in active, adaptive relationship to external reality. But always selectively, uniquely in terms of his own particularly conditioned history as an organic individual, in terms of a developing, dynamic pattern of responses, which, like the patterns of social institutions, can be understood only in terms of its history. The future grows out of the relation of present to past, and the past lives on, constantly modified, in the present.

But such an analysis of dynamic development is entirely ruled out in Soviet psychology. Soviet psychologists, says Kolbanovskii, another of Rubinshtein's critics, "fully realize the perversity of a functional analysis of the psyche." They are warned against it, just as literary critics are warned against a functional study of literary forms which suggest that literature reflects reality in a different way and toward a different end than politics or the natural sciences. This anti-functional position in psychology is still not considered inconsistent with devotion to Pavlov as the great materialist psychologist. But Pavlov is now held to be an opponent of Mendel-Morgan-Weissmann, because his teachings show "that the evolution of unconditioned reflexes is indivisibly connected with the evolution of conditioned reflexes, coming constantly into being in the process of the animal's adaptation to the conditions of existence." Bykov said that Pavlov's interest in cortical regulation played an exceptional role "in the development of Soviet creative Darwinism." (These quotations are taken from the reports in the *Current Digest of the Soviet Press.*) Pavlov's importance is now held to lie in his having shown that all vitally important functions of an organism are regulated by the cortex of the great hemispheres, including the restoration of disordered functions of an injured organism. Soviet psychologists, Wortis says, accord a "high dignity" to consciousness. It is the latest and most fully organized product of the evolutionary process. And the descriptions of the way in which this most advanced and most recent part of the organism controls the rest are an obvious parallel to the total control of society

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by the most advanced elements politically in the dictatorship of the Communist party. Academician Speransky is criticized for studying pathological nervous systems "in divorce from the guiding role of the cortex of the great cerebral hemispheres." The cortex, of course, like the Communist leadership, most immediately reflects higher reality, and its direct guidance must always be acknowledged.

In a Soviet society images of reality get distorted or disintegrated only when there is organic impairment of some sort, as a result of fatigue, wounds, or disease, or when, in his conscious thinking, the worker generalizes "unwarrantably" on the basis of particular or personal experience. Cases of the first sort are dealt with purely medically or surgically—and here, of course, Soviet psychiatry is technically very advanced, and has done a great deal of work on organic explanations and treatments of the psychoses. The few reports Wortis gives of cases in which no organic impairment seemed involved are exceedingly unilluminating. No interest whatsoever is shown in the worker's own sense of the realities of his situation or in the history of his psychological development. It is bourgeois idealism to assume that illness is psychogenetic or that responses to past circumstances continue to exert a dynamic role after the circumstances which they reflect no longer exist. In such cases the treatment is mostly symptom treatment; the worker is given some sedatives or tonics; often a change in work or environment is recommended. "Gurevvich and Sereiskii think the northern seas are invigorating for depressed patients and recommend the Crimea for states of agitation. 'A calming influence on the nervous system,' they say 'can be obtained from travel on the Volga.'"

Where a worker's ideas are such that they have to be taken account of, they are dealt with either by "reasoning" or in the corrective labor camps of the political police. Since the only cure for unreality is in very immediate productive, cooperative contact with reality, sexual and political deviants alike are sent to cut down trees in Siberia. Wortis remarks that it is the deep Soviet "confidence in the wholesome restorative functions of work which has contributed to some misinformed discussion of 'forced labor camps' in unfriendly circles."

WORTIS'S *Soviet Psychiatry* is an uncritical, clear, informed, wholly "party-partisan" account of the history, techniques, and institutional developments of psychiatry in Russia. Dr. Wortis accepts Russian nationalist perspectives completely, as far as discussion of origins and influences are concerned, says nothing that would not be acceptable in Russia even in its present mood of complete reaction against the West, and prints without demur statements by Russians which accuse American psychologists—on the basis of reference to two articles—of being totally at the service of racialism. Much, however, that Wortis says of child guidance, nursery schools, and the treatment of the war-wounded and insane in Russia sounds good as he reports it. Hospitalization is avoided —from necessity, perhaps—and the mentally ill, under supervision, are given suitable productive work outside institutions whenever possible. They are probably better off than many who decay in idleness in our own crowded, understaffed state institutions. And there is undoubtedly something to what the Russians say about the American social sciences, particularly to what they say about the subjective idealism and mysticism of some depth psychology,* just as there is something to what Russian critics say of the broken image of man, the formalistic inversions, the social and psychological pathology in a good deal of Western literature, both popular and avant-garde.

But what Dr. Wortis's book emphatically demonstrates—if it needed demonstrating—is the iron logic behind Communism's utter extinction of the individual self. This logic is orthodox in theory—it is explicit in Marx, Engels, and Lenin—and it has been appallingly proved and demonstrated in practice. The confessions of opponents of the regime at Communist trials show that by "immediate pressure of the environment," by torture, narcosis, hypnosis, and indoctrination in various combinations, the self's organic past can actually be negated, and that it can be made to "reflect" completely the party-partisan view of reality. Since those who do not come to reflect this reality are considered

*Yet depth psychology and other types of *individualist* psychology denounced by the Russian critics, it is worth pointing out, form only one of a number of psychological orientations in this country; and even from the point of view of a *socially* centered psychology and psychiatry, there seems to be no comparison between what American workers have accomplished in the way of sophisticated thinking and solid research—one need only mention the name of John Dewey and the psychiatric school of William Alanson White and Harry Stack Sullivan—and what Russian psychologists have done.

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ultimate enemies of the people, there is no moral limit to the use which may be made of these psychological, physical, and medical means of extinguishing the self.

With the destruction of the self and of the structural autonomy of the various arts and sciences, with the disappearance of the shamans and seers, the isolates and introverts, who have contributed so many insights in the past, Marxism pretty well ends the possibility of novelty and spontaneity, of creative discovery and qualitative emergences in the various levels and segments of society. In the long run—if there is a long run—this should work to the advantage of the West. But it is also important to study carefully Engels' sociology of freedom, the Marxist "reflection-of-reality" psychology, to see if it is entirely irrelevant to our situation, to see if a diminishing and narrowing of the self, of individuality, is not also occurring in the West.

The spread of industrialism and egalitarianism has abolished a good deal of the psychic diversity growing out of the individual's immediate productive relations with society and nature. Mass manufacture, mass media, and mass education have made urban exteriors and mental interiors much the same throughout the country. In America in the last two decades, in the government, the trade unions, and the universities, there has been a striking development of bureaucratic techniques which enforce conformity. This tendency has been greatly increased, naturally, by the world struggle with Communism, even though that struggle is sincerely made in the name of individual freedom. But much of the manipulative, morale-building, personnel-testing psychology and sociology of adjustment in this country, which puts itself more and more in the service of the government and the foundations, is not really so very different in its premises and purposes from the "reflection-of-reality" psychology of the Russians. A genuine struggle against Russian anti-humanism should require our putting as much effort as we possibly can into discovering what social and political grounds still exist—or can be made to exist—in our contemporary society for the survival of what David Riesman calls the autonomous individual. Neither wholly "other-directed" nor wholly "inner-directed," the autonomous individual is able to live valuably in society and yet be himself. This is possible only when society is of such a character that self-affirming choices are constantly necessary and are felt to make a real difference to society as well as to the self. This is a religious and philosophic question as well as a social one, of course. It is here that the humanities and social sciences can most creatively collaborate, and it is here that their real opposition to the sociology of Stalinist Communism is most crucially tested.

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LETTERS FROM READERS

The State of the "Nation"

To the Editor of Commentary:

I kept wondering, as I read Granville Hicks's essay in your last issue on "The Liberals Who Haven't Learned," whether the piece had originally been written the way it appeared. I got the impression that Mr. Hicks might first have done a reminiscent job on the follies of liberals in the 20's, 30's, and 40's and then, as an afterthought, or possibly as an assist in an offensive headed up elsewhere, tacked on an introductory section and a concluding paragraph charging "pro-Soviet bias" in the *Nation*. Perhaps not. But if my impression happens to have been right, it would account for the pieced-together effect of the essay.

The main section discussing the circumstances that led yesterday's liberals to mingle politically or journalistically with Communists and fellow-travelers is interesting enough, though the author's thesis is certainly arguable. I shall not argue it here. But I want at least to set him and you straight on certain facts in that section which have a bearing on Mr. Hicks's use of the *Nation* as Exhibit A in his array of misled liberals.

Mr. Hicks says: "When the *New Masses* was founded in 1926, with a subsidy from the Garland Fund, it included on its executive board John Dos Passos, Paxton Hibben, Freda Kirchwey, James Rorty, and Rex Stout, and listed among its contributing editors Sherwood Anderson, Van Wyck Brooks, Stuart Chase, Waldo Frank, Lewis Mumford, Eugene O'Neill, Elmer Rice, Carl Sandburg, Upton Sinclair, and Edmund Wilson. Most of these people must have believed that the *New Masses* was going to be another organ of the united front, as the old *Masses* had in fact been. Actually, of course, the Communists controlled it, and it was purely an instrument of Communist propaganda, but, nevertheless, many of the liberal names remained on the masthead for a number of years."

This little story is untrue in almost every important particular. The *New Masses* was started in 1926 by a group of people among whom there was not a single honest-to-Stalin party member, although a couple were Communists by conviction. The board of editors was similarly composed. The idea of everybody in the group was to launch an independent, radical, free-wheeling, art-and-literary magazine pretty much in the image of the *Masses*—and that is what the *New Masses* was in its first years. It had nothing to do with the Communist party or the Soviet Union. No paper could have been less "controlled," by Communists or anybody else. (On the other hand its founders and editors could hardly have believed the *New Masses* "was going to be another organ of the united front as the old *Masses* had in fact been" if only for the reasons that, one, there was no "united front" in 1926 to be an organ of, and, two, during the lifetime of the old *Masses* there was not even a Communist party with which to unite.) The *New Masses* turned down a piece by Trotsky when he was Foreign Minister in 1926 because the board thought it would seem too partisan and political to print things by Soviet officials. It accepted pieces by Max Eastman after he had been denounced by the party as a Trotskyist. It accepted pieces by Scott Nearing after he had been thrown out of the party as a "white chauvinist" for predicting a Japanese war against the United States. But mostly it printed sketches and pictures and verses that were literary and artistic and only incidentally political. The vast majority of the writers were liberals or wholly independent—even romantic—radicals.

It seems queer that Mr. Hicks should be so wrong about the *New Masses* in its first years, since he was one of its editors later on—from 1934 to 1939—when it had in truth been taken over by the Communists and become "purely an instrument of Communist propaganda." (And it seems queer, too, that he failed to mention this fact.) Perhaps he never ran through the earlier volumes, assuming that the dogmatic, sectarian stuff that dominated the paper in the last half of the 30's was characteristic of its beginnings. He should take a look at the first few volumes or at a useful book called *The Little Magazine* by Frederick J. Hoffman, Charles Allen, and Carolyn F. Ulrich published in 1946 by the Princeton University Press. And then write another piece.

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And now a few words about the section of his essay that I can't help regarding as an addendum. Mr. Hicks presents as evidence of the illusions regarding Communism that continue to afflict some liberals the *Nation's* Eighty-fifth Anniversary Issue, published last December 16, on "Peace with Russia: Can It Be Negotiated?" In it he found enough "pro-Soviet bias" to "color the entire issue." I consider this the neatest trick of the century. To begin with, the twenty-five authors who contributed to the symposium included no Communists and only four or five who could fairly be called leftists. Most of them were liberals, outspokenly opposed to Communism. They were chosen for their expert knowledge of the fields they covered—and for their willingness to consider with open minds the possibility of a peace arrived at through negotiation. Several supported the view that negotiation is not worth attempting until a situation of military equality has been achieved.

To ILLUSTRATE his thesis that the issue was "pro-Soviet" in its general tendency, Mr. Hicks dealt at length with an article by myself on the political implications of the Korean war, and, less exhaustively, with two on Germany by J. Alvarez del Vayo and Carolus, and one by Isaac Deutscher on "The War of Ideas." By selecting a few sentences from my article he tried to show that my purpose was to portray "a Russia riding the wave of inevitable revolution, opposed by a United States that has lost its democratic beliefs and processes." Now usually I object to the trick of taking lines out of context to prove a point. This time I have little complaint to make. It is true Mr. Hicks's omissions seem to have been made with an eye to strengthening his argument. For example the words "We must accept revolution as the dominant, inescapable fact of our time" were followed by three dots which did duty for thirty-odd lines of careful qualification and explanation. The next words quoted—"We must become, and quickly, the new sponsor of revolution, helping the people of the world to win all that Communism promises or provides—plus liberty"—are separated from the concluding sentence in his excerpt by two sturdy paragraphs, without which my remarks sound far more dogmatic and drastic than they did in context. The final sentence—"We must, if we are to seize a chance which may indeed be the last, rediscover our democratic beliefs, lost somewhere in the compromises of these years of shifting expediencies"—was subtracted from a paragraph which pointed out the effect of our dealings with Chiang Kai-shek and the German generals, and concluded with the comment: "We ditch our professed principles, and along with them goes our security." That these omissions constitute a form of distortion anyone would, I think, admit. But still I would willingly stand on the lines quoted if they could be detached from the interpretations supplied by Hicks. With considerable ingenuity he provides the exact "slant" that brings me out where he wants to place me—as an advocate of Russia and a runner-down of the United States. Unless COMMENTARY would like to reprint my whole article—I offer it absolutely free—I can only hope its readers will dig out their last issue and read the quotations minus the exegesis by Mr. Hicks, and then accept my word that I mean what I say rather than what my critic says I mean.

Mr. Hicks's treatment of the other three articles he mentions is in my judgment more cursory and even more unfair. But the important point is, of course, his conclusion that the whole Anniversary Issue is permeated with pro-Soviet implications. Merely to deny this is to convince no one. The proof of the issue is in the reading. Without any hesitation I would offer the contents of "Peace with Russia: Can It Be Negotiated?" as proof positive of the fact Mr. Hicks seeks to deny: that the *Nation* is a journal with a record of consistent liberalism plus a militant spirit that seems to have largely evaporated from political journalism in this sad postwar world. Perhaps some of your readers would like to send for a copy and come to their own conclusions. If they do, I feel sure they will agree with the scores of persons who wrote us letters of commendation after the issue appeared and the organizations that ordered copies in bulk for members and study groups.

We had for instance a letter from Joseph Short, Secretary to the President, expressing Mr. Truman's "appreciation" of our effort *after* he saw the issue. We received a warmly approving letter from Attorney General J. Howard McGrath. "It is indeed informative and instructive," he said, "to have the opinions and suggestions, as outlined in these articles, on the gravest problem perplexing our country and the rest of the liberty-loving world." Bishop Baker of the Methodist Church in Los Angeles wrote that our "discussion of the possibility of negotiations with Russia" was "far and away the most important" he had seen and that he had "marked and underlined his copy again and again." Our old liberal friend John Collier wrote: "A superb achievement, a very important deed for the USA, the UN, and the world; and how dreadfully timely!" Dr. F. D. Kershner, dean emeritus of the School of Religion at Butler University, sent an appreciative note telling us that the issue "ought to be

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read carefully by all thoughtful Americans," and added: "The *Nation* continues to shine as a beacon light in the miasma of hatred, prejudice, and superstition which so largely engulf the world." One of the nicest letters came from Rabbi Roland B. Gittelsohn, of Rockville Center, Long Island, who said: "Having studied the entire issue very carefully I want you to know that I am proud to have my name associated with it. This issue is the most careful, sober, thoughtful approach to the problem of peace that I have seen anywhere. It is not a magazine; it is a book of first-rate importance. May I congratulate you and your staff on a magnificent job which is entirely in the tradition of the *Nation*."

I could multiply these approving comments, I assure you, but space, if not modesty, prevents. Perhaps these few will serve to indicate that a number of persons quite as free from "pro-Soviet bias" as Mr. Hicks do not agree with his estimate of either the Anniversary Issue or the *Nation* itself.

FREDA KIRCHWEY
Editor

The Nation
New York City

Mr. Hicks Replies

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

From the very beginning, my article, "The Liberals Who Haven't Learned," took the 85th anniversary issue of the *Nation* as its point of departure. As I originally wrote it, however, I worked on the assumption that the pro-Soviet bias of the *Nation* was self-evident, and devoted myself almost entirely to explaining the existence of "pro-Soviet liberalism." I was persuaded by the editors that the charge of bias had to be substantiated, and I furnished several pages of documentation. I quite agree with Miss Kirchwey that the resulting essay has a "pieced-together effect," which I don't much like, but that doesn't invalidate either of my arguments.

The first part of Miss Kirchwey's letter makes more of what I said about the early *New Masses* than I think it deserves. I did not mention the fact that she had been a member of the executive board of the *New Masses* in order, as she seems to think, to incriminate her. On the contrary, I was trying to show how easily good, bona fide, non-Communist liberals could be persuaded to cooperate with Communists.

Nevertheless, since Miss Kirchwey has undertaken to set you and me straight, the matter will have to be gone into. "The *New Masses*," she writes, "was started in 1926 by a group of people among whom there was not a single honest-to-Stalin party member, although a couple were Communists by conviction. The board of editors was similarly composed." Now the editors were Egmont Arens, Joseph Freeman, Hugo Gellert, Michael Gold, James Rorty, and John Sloan. Two of these, Mike Gold and Joseph Freeman, were members of the Communist party, and these two were, respectively, president and vice-president of the corporation. Another editor, Gellert, whether or not he was ever a member of the party, was then and long remained a close follower of the party line.

Of course the magazine sought for non-Communist contributors. It did so, very strenuously, in the period (1934-39) when I was on the board of editors. In 1926 it published some non-Communist material and also, in the manner of the old *Masses*, some non-political material, but, after considerable search, I cannot find any anti-Communist material, and I can find a good deal of Communist propaganda. The issue of November 1926 had on the cover a portrait of Lenin with hammer and sickle in the background. Contributors included Anatol Lunacharsky, at that time commissar of education in the Soviet Union, and Leon Trotsky. Five artists, Hugo Gellert, William Gropper, I. Klein, Louis Lozowick, and William Siegel, paid a cooperative tribute to the October Revolution, and Joseph Freeman had an article on Russia called "The Beginning of a Fine World."

For two years the magazine went on pretty much as it had begun: that is, the active editors were Communists or close fellow-travelers; many liberals were listed as members of the executive board and as contributing editors; contributions from non-Communists were welcomed if they were not contrary to the Communist line; considerable avowed Communist propaganda was published. In the spring of 1928 the Garland Fund withdrew its subsidy, and the magazine reorganized, with Mike Gold becoming editor, Hugo Gellert art editor, and Nathalie Gomez business manager. The format was also changed. The executive board was abolished, but most of its members, including Miss Kirchwey, were now listed as contributing editors.

Under the new dispensation the magazine was less lively and more dogmatic, and during the next two years the proportion of overtly Communist material steadily increased. Virtually every issue in these two years was dominated by what Miss Kirchwey calls "dogmatic, sectarian stuff." Yet Miss Kirchwey's name was found among the contributing editors as late as the issue of April 1930.

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There are two other points that have to be cleared up. Miss Kirchwey says, smugly if parenthetically, "On the other hand, its founders and editors could hardly have believed the *New Masses* 'was going to be another organ of the united front as the old *Masses* had in fact been' if only for the reasons that, one, there was no 'united front' in 1926 to be an organ of, and two, during the lifetime of the old *Masses* there was not even a Communist party with which to unite." I was aware of both these facts. As the context makes clear, I was talking about "the united front of the enemies of the status quo," to which I had devoted several paragraphs of my article. (The man who was "agit-prop" director of the Communist party at that time has said that the party then considered the *New Masses* as an instrument for extending its influence.)

Then there is the question of my failure to mention the fact that I was an editor of the *New Masses*. If that fact had seemed relevant, I would have mentioned it, but I was talking about the *New Masses* in the 20's, when I was not an editor. Perhaps I had better mention now that I occasionally wrote for the *Nation* in the early 30's.

So much for Miss Kirchwey's curious notion that a magazine edited by Mike Gold and/or Joe Freeman could ever have been "an independent, radical, free-wheeling art-and-literary magazine." For a year or two the *New Masses* may have given the unwary the impression that that was what it was, but even the pretense was soon abandoned—long before Miss Kirchwey ceased to be a contributing editor.

As FOR Miss Kirchwey's comments on my comments on the *Nation*, what can I say? She admits that she has "little complaint to make" about my quotations, and, since quoting is always a risky business, I am grateful for that. (I really couldn't quote the entire article, and apparently nothing less would have fully satisfied her.) She would "stand on the lines quoted," she says, "if they could be detached from the interpretations supplied by Mr. Hicks." Of course I believe they can't be detached from these interpretations. After what I have just said about the *New Masses*, I cannot ignore the possibility that certain words may have a different meaning for me than they have for Miss Kirchwey, but in that case I can only insist that my definitions are closer to the accepted norm than hers. The individual reader, as she says, will have to decide for himself, and I am content to leave the judgment to him.

In commenting on the anniversary issue, Miss Kirchwey says that "the writers were chosen for their knowledge of the fields they covered—and their willingness to consider with open minds the possibility of a peace arrived at through negotiation." The key phrase there, of course, is "open minds." My contention is that the minds of several of the contributors are closed—closed against recognition of the extent of Russian aggression and the nature of Russian tyranny, closed against appreciation of the difficulties that Russia has placed and is placing in the way of negotiation.

I am not impressed by Miss Kirchwey's quotations from letters of approval. I can cite as many people and as intelligent people who feel as I do about the *Nation's* bias. See, for instance, some of the letters in the *New Leader* since April 9, brought forth by Miss Kirchwey's suit against that magazine and Clement Greenberg. Miss Kirchwey must know very well, though she pretends not to, that many readers of the *Nation* share my misgivings about its editorial policies.

MISS KIRCHWEY also discussed my article in a signed editorial in the *Nation* of April 14. There she wrote: "For Mr. Hicks is himself an ex-Communist, whose conversion yielded one book and a number of articles (so I am in no danger of serving here as informer), and who may share with other former comrades a natural distrust of those who never joined the fraternity. His animus may be revealed in the curious passage in which he refers to this writer's presence on the 'executive board' of the *New Masses* along with John Dos Passos, Rex Stout, and other non-Communists when it was founded in 1926 and when, according to Mr. Hicks, 'the Communists controlled it and it was purely an instrument of Communist propaganda.' The *New Masses* was not in fact controlled by Communists when it was founded or indeed for several years afterward, as Mr. Hicks could ascertain if he would ask one of its then editors. But it is at least odd that he should make so flat an error. Mr. Hicks himself after the *New Masses* had come under Communist control, was for five years one of its editors—a fact he fails to mention."

I appreciate Miss Kirchwey's delicacy in not serving as an informer, but I don't like the suggestion that my having been a Communist might be news to readers of my piece in COMMENTARY. Exactly as much attention was given to the matter—one reference in the text and one in a footnote—as I think it deserved. Certainly it was not a secret, either when I was a party member or when I left the party. (I do wonder, however, what book my "conversion" yielded.) What all this has to do with my statement about the *New Masses* is utterly obscure. If Miss Kirchwey had consulted a file

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of the magazine, instead of trusting to her memory, she would have discovered that, as I have demonstrated, I was not in error. But even if I had been mistaken, what animus would have been revealed? Is she implying that I am some monster, trying to destroy poor, innocent Freda Kirchwey as, in the opinion of some of his more ardent defenders, Hiss was destroyed by Whittaker Chambers? Is that what she means by "a natural distrust of those who never joined the fraternity"?

The ex-Communists have been taking quite a beating lately, and in general my feeling is that we might as well grin and bear it. I would protest, however, against the assumption that all the persons who became Communists in the 30's can be lumped together, and against the assumption that those who didn't become Communists can be similarly treated as all of one kind. For some of the persons who joined the Communist party in the 30's I have great admiration. For some of those who stayed out, for what seem to me the wrong reasons, I have no regard whatever. But for the persons who saw through Communism when I was taken in by it I have nothing but respect.

I am sorry that Miss Kirchwey thinks she has to find some kind of personal motive for my article. I have been reading — and subscribing to — the *Nation* for twenty-five years, and I did not lightly undertake my criticism of its policies. I am no more eager than Miss Kirchwey to split the liberal ranks. But if my charge of pro-Soviet bias is correct, as I think it is, then it has to be made. For much too long anyone who cared to call himself a liberal has been immune from criticism by other liberals, and many of the weaknesses of liberalism today — it is not in quite such a sorry state as Miss Kirchwey seems to think — can be traced to that fact. In particular liberalism is weakened by its pro-Soviet fringe, the people with the inevitable "but." If it is to function at all in the contemporary world, liberalism must begin by recognizing Communism as evil, as a tragedy, and as a danger. Obviously that is only the beginning for liberalism, but it is the beginning.

GRANVILLE HICKS

Grafton, New York

Mea Culpa

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I have read with very great interest the review "America as Frankenstein," in your January issue, by your eminent contributor Golo Mann. Mr. Mann's review is one of the few negative criticisms of my book, *The Twenty-fifth Hour,* but I must tell you that it has interested me more than all the thousands of reviews published in the twenty-two languages into which my book was translated.

The same reproaches and the same anger expressed by Mr. Mann against my book I have also encountered among numerous rabbis. I find that these reproaches are justified. From the Jewish point of view they are justified. Once I undertook to describe the hundreds of concentration camps, it was to be expected that I would naturally concern myself with the most atrocious camps in history, those camps where the Nazis murdered six million Jews. This I did not do, but dealt only with those camps within my own purview. I did this for subjective reasons: I described what I myself had experienced.

I realize that this explanation, however valid from a subjective point of view, is incomplete, and I am not surprised that others should suspect me of bad intentions or hidden intentions. I hope you will be better impressed with my next book, *The Second Chance,* in which I shall attempt to concern myself more deeply with the sufferings of my neighbors.

Please be assured, Sir, of my most cordial respect, and please be good enough to transmit to Golo Mann my thanks for the honor that he has done my book.

C. VIRGIL GHEORGHIU

Strasbourg, France

The Case of Veit Harlan

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

It was a pleasure to read in the March issue of COMMENTARY Norbert Muhlen's article on the return of Veit Harlan and Werner Krauss to the German entertainment world. The article reveals not only a desire for truth and justice but also a serious concern for the future of German democracy, which cannot survive if tens of thousands of potentially democratic German citizens are to remain excluded from public life and therefore embittered enemies of the state.

However, in the case of Veit Harlan, I myself cannot yet achieve that calm reasonableness which prevails in Muhlen's article. So far as Werner Krauss is concerned, I can grant that his acting in the film *Jud Süss* amounted to no more than his undertaking one of many roles that he has played in the course of his life without inquiring in advance as to their political or moral significance. But Veit Harlan as director did much more than that. An actor must submit his will to that of the author and the director; indeed, his art consists precisely in the capacity to sacrifice his own will and to transform himself under the influence of another's. But a director must at bottom give

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his assent to the spiritual content of a play or a film; he does not give up his own will but on the contrary must make use of his will in order to bring out clearly the essential meanings that dwell within the play or film. To be sure, it is said that Veit Harlan tried to modify the grosser manifestations of anti-Semitism in *Jud Süss:* but this perhaps was a question of taste, not one of conviction.

In any case, Veit Harlan was of far greater consequence than Werner Krauss in bringing to completion a piece of propaganda that served as psychological preparation for the murder of millions of human beings. It is extremely regrettable that such a man should be able once more to play a part in German entertainment with his film *Unsterbliche Geliebte* ("Immortal Beloved").

But it is not enough to say this; it is also important that those outside of Germany should understand how this has become possible. The case of Veit Harlan is merely one manifestation of a development that cannot be properly judged unless one understands its deeper causes. The so-called denazification of Germany failed because it attempted to be too thorough and because it began from false premises. While the Communist party looks upon itself as a party of the elite that must seek by periodic purges to exclude all who are not fully dedicated Communists, the Nazi party was a mass party, and as it grew to take in more and more people, membership no longer implied any real conviction—for example, almost all officials of higher rank were brought into the party; where terror rules, the attainment of a mass membership is not very difficult. But those who drew up the denazification law did not know this, and they saw in every adherence to the party or its organs a freely made declaration of allegiance to Hitler. Thus it came about that in Bavaria, for example, about 800,000 persons fell under the provisions of the law. If we consider that each of these 800,000 persons had at least four relatives and friends who were indirectly affected by the law, it becomes clear that in Bavaria alone 4,000,000 persons, almost half the population, were put in conflict with the law and did their best to frustrate it.

Moreover, the law was applied first against those for whom its application meant the actual loss of bread and butter and who would therefore be under the greatest pressure to win back their places in society as quickly as possible, whereas the more important Nazis in almost every case had enough money saved to be able to wait; it thus came about that the terms of the law—used first against streetcar conductors, porters, and the like—were so blunted as to be no longer of any real application by the time men like Harlan were brought before the denazification courts.

If the denazification law had been based on some knowledge of the real situation, it would have been directed only against those who really had adopted the Nazi point of view; they were a relatively small group, and they would have been most severely judged by the broad masses of the German people, as Mr. Muhlen himself suggests, and would have been prevented from returning to public life. Instead of this, however, the denazification law resulted in the creation of a sense of common interest that united the real Nazis with those who were originally their opponents, even though they may have found it necessary to join one or another of the Nazi organizations.

And so it happened that Harlan was not touched by a denazification law that had been entirely discredited. If the application of the law from the beginning had been restricted to those to whom it really should have applied, then Harlan would without any doubt have found himself within the proscribed group and would no longer be allowed to make films. And we would be spared the necessity of mentioning his name.

Unsterbliche Geliebte has been well attended, not because it is good (it is quite mediocre) but because the protests against its release have made it interesting. This in itself has nothing to do with sympathy for Veit Harlan. A short time before the release of his movie, another film, *Die Sünderin* ("The Sinner"), had an extraordinary financial success because protests had been raised against it on moral grounds. It failed in Switzerland because the critics there found it without interest and nobody talked about it. But enormous numbers saw it in Germany because demonstrations against it had aroused curiosity —in this case also there were acts of violence and the intervention of the police became necessary. No doubt the fuss about *Die Sünderin* involved a considerable element of simple opposition to censorship in general and to any form of terrorization of the public. Likewise, among those who attended Harlan's new film there may have been numerous incorrigible sympathizers with Nazism, but I don't believe that the majority intended to express sympathy for Veit Harlan any more than those who attended *Die Sünderin* wished to honor Willi Forst, the "maker" of that film.

All a newspaper conscious of its responsibility can do is keep silent about Harlan's new film and advise those who are similarly disturbed by his return to public life to be-

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have likewise. I cannot believe that a man who could make something like *Jud Süss* is a great artist. If he makes any more films they will in all likelihood be no better than *Unsterbliche Geliebte,* and if they are not helped by demonstrations, the day will come when nobody will find them worth talking about further. What more could one ask for?

The denazification of Germany failed because by attempting too much it accomplished too little. It is now necessary to avoid new mistakes and to do the only thing that remains to be done: seek better measures. In many cases, unfortunately, it will still be necessary to speak out, but what Veit Harlan has most to fear is silence; for him silence will be death. Let us then keep silent.

FRANZ JOSEF SCHÖNINGH
Süddeutsche Zeitung
Munich, Germany

From Mr. Muhlen

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I suppose that most readers of my account of "The Return of Goebbels' Film-Makers" will agree with Dr. Schöningh, the distinguished editor of the Catholic magazine *Hochland* and co-editor of *Süddeutsche Zeitung,* that there is a distinct difference between the responsibilities of Werner Krauss, an aged actor, and Veit Harlan, the co-author and director of *Jud Süss.* Undoubtedly, Harlan's guilt is much greater than Krauss's, and his return to public attention is for that reason much more objectionable.

Dr. Schöningh is also right in pointing to the inadequacy of the denazification law as one cause of the present dilemma in which true Nazi collaborators appear in the same legal categories of guilt and innocence as the more harmless joiners-under-pressure. Yet since today it is too late to change or correct the law, and since the law did not create a legal basis for an interdiction of Harlan's public reappearance (nor did the more comprehensive German law against inhumanity), the only way left to deal with men like Harlan is to oppose them by spontaneous, democratic action "of the people." Whether such action will be more effective and appropriate if it openly calls for boycott, as Erich Lueth has done, or if the mass media cease to mention Harlan altogether (which would be a boycott at the sources of public opinion), as Dr. Schöningh advocates, seems to be a question of technique rather than principle. I myself doubt that a free and competitive press would be able to maintain silence, and I wonder whether the responsibility of the press is not rather to report, and editorially discuss, all current events, including public scandals.

Readers of COMMENTARY might be interested to know that, since my report was published, Erich Lueth has lost his appeal against the court judgment that forbade him to continue calling for a boycott of Harlan's new film. In protest against this new decision, a committee was formed in Hamburg to support Mr. Lueth's right to express his views. The manifesto of the committee was signed by the leaders of the three great West German parties—the Christian Democratic Union, the Social-Democratic party, and the Free Democratic party—as well as by the leading stage, radio, and press personalities of Hamburg. The committee proclaimed that the case of Harlan vs. Lueth has now developed into a "test of convictions," that the judgment in favor of Harlan is "a victory of anti-humanity," and that "we must do something—now, at once—to eradicate the decision against Lueth." The committee appealed to the general population for funds in defense of Mr. Lueth.

According to information I have received from Mr. Lueth, "countless donations" were immediately sent to the committee, among them many from unemployed persons and from destitute refugees from the Soviet Zone. Mr. Lueth informed me also that threatening and insulting letters he received in connection with the Harlan case were outbalanced by letters of congratulation and solidarity at a ratio of one to ten. I am also told that, in view of this response of German public opinion to the appeal to boycott Goebbels' foremost filmmaker, Veit Harlan has been unable to find a film company to finance his next movie.

NORBERT MUHLEN
New York City

A Correction

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In the article on "New Trends in Biblical Criticism" by H. L. Ginsberg, in the September issue of COMMENTARY, it is stated that only the two last parts of Yehezkel Kaufmann's *History of Israelite Religion* were published by the Bialik Foundation, while the previous parts of the book were published by the author himself. The fact is that all seven parts of the book were published by the Bialik Foundation and the Dvir Publishing Company, and these organizations will also publish the additional two parts of this book which the author is expected to transmit to them in the near future.

E. HAMENACHEM
Bialik Foundation
Jerusalem

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

Dreiser and the Triumph of Art

THEODORE DREISER. By F. O. MATTHIESSEN. William Sloane. 267 pp. $3.50.

Reviewed by SAUL BELLOW

DREISER is not very popular now, unfortunately, and Professor Matthiessen's book will not restore his popularity though it defends him with some real feeling against the usual charges of crude writing, faulty thought, and ridiculous prejudices. Part of this biography is disingenuous, the political part; Matthiessen pretended to see no difference between radicalism and Communism and refused to see that William Z. Foster is not the heir of Eugene V. Debs. Dreiser understood many things better than he did politics; so, probably, did Matthiessen. But Dreiser would not have made, in the writing of a novel, an error of the kind Matthiessen tragically allowed himself to make in this study. It is true that it was left unfinished, but there is no hint in it of a possible different treatment of this political problem; there is only the pitiful obstinacy of a "position," that marvelous dishonesty of modern politics. Through it, you sense Matthiessen's confusion and pain.

His admirers grant that Dreiser was a great novelist who wrote badly. But it is very odd that no one has thought to ask just what the "bad writing" of a powerful novelist signifies. Matthiessen says that his groping after words corresponded to the groping of his thought, "but with both words and thought borne along on the diapason of a deep emotion." This is something of a start, but Matthiessen does not attempt to go very deeply into the matter.

Dreiser's novels are best read quickly. You pass rapidly through the pages, almost as if you were reading a newspaper, but great things remain. Occasionally you are arrested by a powerful phrase; but Dreiser is never entirely free from the habits of a feature-story writer, the old-fashioned sort, like Brisbane, who has fed on Gustavus Myers and Ingersoll and on Congressional rhetoric. When he is at his worst he is not even a slick feature-story writer. His passion for the subject failing him, Dreiser can never rest on writing itself; he has not that skill. But there are few modern writers whose passion for the subject is so steady. And then his journalistic habits are often useful; by means of them he captures things that perhaps could not be taken in other ways—common expressions, flatnesses, forms of thought, the very effect of popular literature itself.

I think it is fair to judge a writer in part by the way he breaks through his first defects, the stiffness of his beginner's manner, his romanticism or sentimentality or modishness, his early thicknesses or thinnesses. In writing, as in personal history, what a man overcomes is a measure of his quality. An individual of any category or class performs an important and a fascinating service when he drives beyond the ordinary limitations of his type. Dreiser is, before our eyes, a newspaperman deepened, serious, finally showing a capacity that unites him with men of a very different sort who started out in a very different way. Each comes to the essential accompanied by all his accidents. A writer in America is likely to be an "irregular."

The majority of modern novelists with their care for the poetry of detail, and in their craving for stability, have not made much progress toward the greatest contemporary facts. How many European novels today have the power of the factual accounts of deportations, camps, escapes, battles, hitherto unknown relations? Considering how hideously life has been shaken, it is remarkable perhaps that any novels are being written at all in, say, France and Italy. And it is understandable that writers should try to preserve the old sort of accomplishments. But how can the *écrivain artiste* keep pace with these phenomena? Even before the war, he had fallen far behind. The social meaning of his great skill was conservative; it was an effort to contain, in the military meaning of the word, great disturbances. A very talented novelist, Alberto Moravia, in his recent book, *Conjugal Love,* shows how reality is bound to revenge itself on the writer, the cultivated artist, *l'écrivain*

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artiste, when he keeps it at several removes. It will force him to discover the emptiness of his accomplishments, the vanity of his stability.

I often think the criticisms of Dreiser as a stylist at times betray a resistance to the feelings he causes readers to suffer. If they can say that he can't write they need not experience these feelings. And I think, too, that the insistence on neatness and correctness is one of the signs of a modern nervousness and irritability. When has clumsiness in composition been felt as so annoying, so enraging? The "good" writing of the *New Yorker* is such that one experiences a furious anxiety, in reading it, about errors and lapses from taste; finally what emerges is a terrible hunger for conformism and uniformity. The smoothness of the surface and its high polish must not be marred. One has a similar anxiety in reading a novelist like Hemingway and comes to feel in the end that Hemingway wants to be praised for the offenses he does not commit. He is dependable; he never names certain emotions or ideas, and he takes pride in that—it is a form of honor. In it, really, there is submissiveness, acceptance of restriction.

Many American novelists, moreover, reveal in their extreme concern with expression that they are greatly oppressed by details. When they lack the strength that can encompass and lift up these details—facts of our American, modern reality—they are inclined to put into accomplishments of style what is really a helplessness or recoil. Ugliness and banality growing huge, there is the fear that no poetry can inhabit the same space. So single, isolated perceptions wound the novelist, colors oppress him, factories bear him to the ground, business and advertising make him suffer, cellophane sticks in his throat. He will then "handle" by his writing his various pains. A good example of this sort of "handling" is the trip from West Egg described in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby.* Dreiser had no need for this use of language because of his greater lifting power. He depended on principle, not on taste. It was something other than taste that helped him during the crushing years of poverty and near-insanity in the New York slums. He returned to sanity and life, disfigured, I believe, but with the important knowledge of how life could be supported, and this was a knowledge that carried fairly easily facts that were too great a burden to other writers.

This important knowledge was not what Dreiser thought it was. When he is writing about his principles, in language awkwardly borrowed from Herbert Spencer or Huxley, they are gone the instant he invokes them. They reveal themselves sometimes rather incidentally in a power of lament—"And off he walked, very gay and dapper and assured because of a recent and seemingly durable success of his own." But they are most plain where the line of fate surpasses clearly the confusion of many wishes and efforts, and when Dreiser bitterly, grudgingly, admits his *amor fati.* This is what is so moving in him, his balkiness and sullenness, and then his admission of allegiance to life. The fact that he is a modern American gives an extreme contour to this allegiance; it is made after immersion in the greatest difficulties and reasons for pessimism and with all the art of which he is capable, art stubbornly insisted upon under the severest discouragements. His history is that of a man convinced by his experience of "unpoetic reality" of the need to become an artist.

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Emancipation As Villain

THE AMERICAN JEW: CHARACTER AND DESTINY. By LUDWIG LEWISOHN. Farrar, Straus and Young. 175 pp. $2.50.

Reviewed by MILTON HIMMELFARB

AT LEAST since *Paradise Lost,* it has been a commonplace of literary criticism that the villain of the piece, against the will of the author and to the discomfiture of honest folk, finds it all too easy to monopolize the stage. Professor Lewisohn's villain is the 19th century. Almost obsessively he returns again and again to it.

The attack on the 19th century is not new. From the Right, in a brilliant work by a sinister French reactionary, it was derided as stupid; from the Left it was dismissed as the inglorious epoch of the triumph of bourgeois meanness; art passed the merciless judgment of personifying it in Flaubert's Monsieur Homais. To Lewisohn, as to many others, it is contemptible for a smug rationalism; a wilful severing of the human being from the human community; a bookkeeper's view of the universe, as made explicit in the double-entry calculus of pleasure and pain; and an arrogant science indifferent to God because it could not see Him in its telescopes. For Lewisohn, however, the worst offense of the 19th century is the catastrophe it visited upon the Jews—the Emancipation.

To understand what this word means to the author, it will be helpful to remember what the word Liberation came to mean for many soldiers and civilians in Europe in the final days of the last war: the ideal of freedom degenerated into the actuality of looting and theft. So with Emancipation, in Lewisohn's view: Jews exchanged their character of Jacob for that of Esau, eagerly yielding the father's blessing, Judaism and the Jewish tradition, for the mess of pottage that was the 19th century's vulgar set of values. For most of us Jews in 20th-century America, the Emancipation in which we glory is like that of the 19th century—only more so.

This is the corruption that Lewisohn perceives and the evil that he would banish. His special anguish is that while American society as a whole has not totally surrendered to the mass values of our day, most Jews have embraced them with passion. He does honor to the men who have set their faces against the dominant trend in our civilization: who refuse the "godlessness" and mediocrity of the public school and would restore education to religious auspices; who valiantly resist mass communication to dedicate themselves to art. Their counterparts within the Jewish community, he finds, are all too few. They are the (real) religious Jews and the (real) Zionists. Few as they are, however, it is only among them that we can look for a saving remnant.

For the sake of argument, as the lawyers say, let us grant Lewisohn his first principles and concede the worthlessness of much, perhaps most, in the culture of the 19th and 20th centuries. Having granted all this, we must still pause. There is in his denunciation a facility that repels. A more honestly ambivalent attitude toward the entire trend of modern civilization, whether in its higher or in its lower reaches, would have been more attractive. The thinkers whose disciple Lewisohn represents himself to be had a more nuanced thought and a more modulated tone.

Franz Rosenzweig is one of these masters. In the long and painful debate with himself on the question of *halakha* and *mitzvot,* Law and Commandments, he finally arrived at a position in which he accepted *kashrut* and tentatively, deferentially recommended it for others as well. His *kashrut,* however, was Scriptural ("intrinsic"), rather than the *kashrut* of the Talmud and the *Shulhan Arukh.* Lewisohn's is also Scriptural. The difference is that Lewisohn is hortatory; that he evades the distinction between his *kashrut* and Orthodoxy's, and that he is seemingly unaware that the distinction is caused by the influence of that 19th century he so execrates. Rosenzweig has been described as a man who would not be Orthodox because he knew that "something had happened"—the 19th century, in fact. He understood that if the 19th century was strong and *true* enough to keep him from Orthodoxy, it must be very strong and true indeed. (Ernest Renan once said: "Monsieur Homais was right, alas!") Consequently Rosenzweig did not denounce those who, not having his faith and his understanding in sufficiently great measure, could not resist the 19th century as strongly as he did. He knew there was a real problem. If Lewisohn knew and understood, would he denounce?

IT WOULD be unfair to the spirit and purpose of this book to subject its rhetoric to a logical analysis of coherence and consistency. Essentially the rhetoric is a species of lyrical oratory

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that must be respected on its own terms. There is an important element in Lewisohn's structure of ideas and emotions, however, that does not blend with the rest. This is the theme of Zionism, particularly secular Zionism. Secular Zionism is *par excellence* the child of the 19th century. In its impulses and character, it is an attempt to "be like all the nations." Not only does it derive from 19th-century values, it also prefers them. Lewisohn speaks with admiration of the motives and content of Hasidism, but secular Zionism is a revolt against that Judaism for which Hasidism is a symbol. He also has much to say about the character and fate of the Jewish people, its separateness, distinctiveness, and uniqueness. There is much room for discussion of this belief, but let us again, for the sake of argument, grant him its validity. What we cannot grant is that secular Zionism in any significant way illustrates or serves these principles—except in the sense of mere geographical apartness.

Is physical apartness, then, the object Lewisohn really has in mind? Does that perhaps explain some of his feeling against the public school in this country? Can it be that the fact of national apartness in Israel is justification for itself in his eyes, but that he judges Jewish apartness in the United States to require a more elaborate rationalization? Does the major part of his text only constitute that rationalization? An alternative exists. Lewisohn means everything he says about the modern world and Judaism. He is also a Zionist, and has mistakenly tried to embellish secular Zionism by drawing it into an inappropriately lofty category.

Lewisohn's execution, in sum, is not equal to his intention; and in subtlety, rigor, and persuasion he does not benefit by comparison with the masters he invokes.

A Quest for Certainty

WORLD WITHIN WORLD. THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF STEPHEN SPENDER. Harcourt, Brace. 312 pp. $3.50.

Reviewed by C. HARTLEY GRATTAN

THE operative word in Stephen Spender's autobiography is "guilt." It appears in various contexts in the book and, separately and collectively, the references make clear that his sense of guilt has powerfully conditioned his life and opinions. In this he is rather representative than unique among contemporary Englishmen of "good" birth and small inherited income, the minor *rentiers* who carry on so much of the intellectual life. (Spender says his inherited income was three hundred pre-devaluation pounds per year.) So common—indeed so universal—is a sense of guilt among these people that Lewis and Maude, in their invaluable book *The English Middle Classes*, isolate it as a major factor explaining their worsened fortunes today. They trace its genesis back to the 1880's, a watershed decade in English history, and its history forward to Victor Gollancz's Left Book Club and the victory of the Labor party in 1945.

In Spender's book, one of the clearest expositions of the meaning he attaches to this guilt is as follows:

"From notes which I kept at this time—notes of such urgency that they even interrupt the manuscript sketches of poems—I find that there were two things which incessantly preoccupied me. One was the problem of the freedom of the individual. . . . The other was the problem of the sense of guilt. For if, on the one hand, the Communists told me that my sense of freedom was only a projection of the interest of the bourgeois class, there was also a Freudian argument

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which told me that I only troubled about these things out of a sense of guilt. Rid myself of guilt, and I would no longer worry about my privileged position in society.

"What I gradually came to see is that there is not just one guilt but many guilts, and that we must learn to distinguish between these, discarding useless guilt and making use of that kind of guilt which, so far from inhibiting us, releases us. . . .

"Thus although guilt may create for us a kind of stumbling darkness in which we cannot act, it is also the thread leading us out of a labyrinth into places where we accept, instead of being overwhelmed by, the responsibility of action."

SPENDER'S uncle, J. A. Spender, the distinguished Liberal journalist, was a paragon of traditional Liberalism, and something of a Horrible Example to Stephen; Stephen's father Harold was the younger brother, and was definitely, in his elder brother's eyes, an offside Liberal. The father supported Lloyd George whom, with a sound instinct, the uncle regarded as a disaster to the Liberal party. Harold Spender stood for Parliament as a Lloyd-Georgite and lost; the symbolism of the defeat was not lost on his son Stephen. The Liberals were playing out. Stephen, therefore, inherited a deliquescent Liberalism, already eaten at by Laboristic acids which would in time weaken it into the political futility we witness in 1951. It was this deliquescent Liberalism that John Maynard Keynes, insofar as he had a definite political purpose, hoped to stiffen into renewed vitality with his "new economics," one of the purposes of which was to preserve what was most valuable in the status quo, even if by heterodox techniques. Stephen, with so many of his literary fellows who were on the intellectual march, skipped right over Keynes, and they sublimated their guilt, as Lewis and Maude say, "into acceptance of alien political and social creeds."

Stephen's *Forward from Liberalism* (1936) rejected both his uncle's orthodox Liberalism and his father's Lloyd-Georgism to embrace large portions of Communism, enough to get him invited to join the party by Harry Pollitt himself; the book was a Gollancz Left Book Club selection. (Spender's relations with Communism he tells much better and more fully in *The God That Failed.*) Nor was the whole business on the intellectual level. Stephen also had the belief in "the freedom and emotionalism which were supposed to characterize proletarian life," to quote Lewis and Maude again. This comes out very clearly in his account of his relations with his secretary-companion:

"I was in love, as it were, with his background, his soldiering, his working-class home. Nothing moved me more than to hear him tell stories of the Cardiff streets of Tiger Bay, of his uncle who was in the Salvation Army. . . . When Jimmy talked of such things, I was perhaps nearer poetry than talking to most of my fellow poets. At such moments, too, I was very close to certain emotions awakened in childhood by the workers, who to us seemed at the same time coarse, unclean, and yet with something about them of forbidden fruit, and also of warmheartedness which suddenly flashed across the cold gulf of class, secret and unspoken."

In literary terms, this appears in Spender's admiration for D. H. Lawrence, who was of proletarian origin even if hardly, to anyone not suffering delusions about the working class, a spokesman for proletarian ideas, ideals, and personal characteristics. But at least Lawrence spoke up for spontaneous feelings, warm-hearted personal relationships, and all the proletarian qualities as Spender imagined them. And Lawrence's dislike for Bloomsbury, in which Spender was himself deeply involved, did not disturb Spender, for he himself judged Bloomsbury to be radically incomplete on those political grounds which had led him around to sympathy for Lawrence in the first place.

IF THIS book is a document of primary importance to students of the middle class in its most recent phases, it is a major literary document as well, and a superior example of the autobiographer's art. As Spender sees it, his story is a contribution to understanding the English literary generation of the 30's: Spender himself, W. H. Auden, C. Day Lewis, Christopher Isherwood, Rex Warner and so on, even a litterateur *manqué* like R. H. S. Crossman. From Spender's narrative it appears that W. H. Auden stage-managed this whole generation. To Spender he said one day "[that] he had changed his mind about my work. I should not write poetry, but autobiographical prose narrative." Well, here is an installment of it. *The God That Failed* story is another, *European Witness* still another, while *Forward from Liberalism* is a document-along-the-way, as also is *The Destructive Element.* The poems which Spender has disobediently written fit in here and there most appositely and may be forgiven!

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If guilt has served Spender (in Auden's words) as an "intolerable neural itch" that set him off and kept him going, his self-confessed weakness for publicity and his unappeasable gregariousness have fed the autobiographer most efficiently. The names that spangle this book—from Virginia Woolf to Lady Ottoline Morrell, W. B. Yeats, Hemingway, and Malraux: the list is endless—are sufficient testimony to the fact that he gets around socially. He writes most interestingly about them, and is himself a most interesting person, the basic necessity in an autobiographer.

Where, we must ask, does Spender seem to be going? Considering the state of the world and Spender's deep involvement in public affairs, it would be easy to say cynically that he is going to end up as a permanent committeeman on the Permanent Committee on Cataclysmic Emergencies—PCCE to you. As I write this he is attending a session in India. But his case is far more fundamental than that. Here is a statement of his predicament as he sees it:

"I had a longing for eternity. . . . I was constantly preoccupied with the idea of judgment; for on a certain level of my mind it seemed impossible not to believe that everything we do is judged, and that life is a kind of sum which has meaning because good is related to bad. . . .

"So I had a thirst for moral knowledge, combined with a perpetual fear of the moral sum with which I myself would be one day confronted. Yet in the end I wanted to know the answer of good and evil. What was unbearable was to think that there is no moral awakening, that we creep from moment to moment, deceiving ourselves, sometimes guilty and remorseful, sometimes happy, but never knowing the answer, never seeing things as a whole. . . ."

At bottom Spender's problem is a religious one. His search is for certainty. On this showing he really belongs, not in the tradition of a decayed political party, but in the far older English tradition of religio-social protest which started, perhaps we can say, with John Wycliffe and the Lollards and which has intermittently shown its face in England ever since, even in a nonconformist-chapel form in the Labor party. Because we live in a politico-economic age, Spender has tried to find his answers in politics and economics; because he is a writer, he has also sought answers in literature: but in the end he will seek it in religion.

Spender writes in *World Within World*: "Nothing, indeed, could be more different than the world of the 1930's, which I have defined here as the period of Intervention and Non-intervention, from that of the rising 1940's. The 1930's saw the last of the idea that the individual, accepting his responsibilities, could alter the history of the time. From now on, the individual could only conform to or protest against events which were outside his control."

Impaled today on the dilemma of action versus quietism, Spender's mind is, on his own account of it, moving along with the dilemma unresolved—hence the feverish committee work, toward some as yet undiscovered certainty. He must have it to live. He has not the skeptical but the believing temperament.

As so many have, Spender harks back to the response of Wordsworth and his fellows to the French Revolution to get some light on these unhappy days. Will Spender, then, end up a Wordsworth type, repudiating his past entirely in the end, stultifying his present and future, but still a poet? There are no signs of this in this book. His "problem" he has still preserved, far more unresolved than *circa* 1937. Will he eventually relapse even further and become a frigid conservative of the Southey type? Or will he be the unrepentant offsider to the bitter

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end, like William Hazlitt? Committed as he is to the role of autobiographer, Spender is sure in due course to let us know.

The Intellectuals and the American Idea

THE NICE AMERICAN. By GERALD SYKES. Creative Age. 310 pp. $3.00.

Reviewed by HAROLD ROSENBERG

SYKES's novel has hit on something that seems to be budding among American intellectuals: the impulse to join in the leadership of United States society as it is—or, at least some would say, as it is becoming. In the early 30's, the thought of getting into the game of authority associated itself with revolution; intellectuals dreamed of their emergence as commissars after another apocalyptic Ten Days That Shook the World. It is characteristic of today's changed mental climate that "the permanent revolution" is used as the title of a special issue of *Fortune* (February) dedicated to the American tradition—and the image on the cover is not Marx's paternally derogatory beard nor Trotsky's ominously glittering spectacles but George Washington's reassuring wig. The intellectuals will now move upward not as vanguard of the proletariat but as formulators of The American Idea. Ambitions have been at once solidified and reduced in scale; perhaps because, after fifteen years of participating in authority through New Deal agencies, war programs, and high-circulation cultural organs, catastrophe and apotheosis no longer seem prerequisite to a seat in the social firmament. Or in more prosaic language, it has come to seem more reasonable to get to the top floor by taking an elevator than by blowing up the building.

Not that the intellectuals are thinking of running America. Strictly speaking, their urge is for place and role rather than for power. Even to secure that, they will have a tough struggle against the cultural Know-Nothingism that abominates Acheson, for example, because he has an admirable grasp of English speech. Yet for all the resistance to it, an elite of the knowing is being formed in America; it has captured certain almost impregnable strong points; the businessman is becoming willing to recognize that his own genius is limited to particular interests; and the realization is growing that the time is almost here when everything may depend on the man with what Thomas Mann called "an eye to the general."

Sykes's protagonist is an intellectual who has experienced perhaps an exactly correct amount of authority. He is a lieutenant colonel —not a major general, certainly not a "supreme commander." Before the war Colonel Childress was a photographer, of the kind who takes photography as a fine art. This is as right as making him a colonel, since the passion for place is strongest not in poets or painters but among the practitioners of the middle arts that look to The People, and which have already established their own hierarchies, analogous to the military, of department chiefs, group supervisors, media directors, specialists, assignment editors. Childress, the artistic photographer, has also worked for Edison Electric in a fairly responsible job, though not a top one either. Now he's in North Africa with the army, the war is just over, and he's thinking about his place in the world as a "nice" American, that is, an American who thinks about his place in the world instead of just jumping into it.

That the thinking man is going to be needed in America is owing to the new leading position of the United States in international affairs. Having appeared suddenly among the nations with power in his hands, the American will have to be made conscious of himself as one capable of command. "We're going to have to learn how to be imperial," Childress soliloquizes on his North African stage, surrounded by Arabs, Frenchmen, British. "If we don't produce a new kind of intellectual leadership, we'll go under."

Childress weighs himself and his Americanism in the balance of two women, and this is appropriate, too, even if it does lead to some unintended comedy. If the American intellectual is to start taking responsibility for social life in the United States, instead of regarding it as a geological phenomenon like the Rocky Mountains whose raw massiveness cannot be grasped by the intellect, he will do well to begin with his personal life, which means, of course, with the qualities of his mother, wife, and mistress.

As A pioneer in the fiction of global Americanism, Sykes has hewed rather roughly the two female figures on whom Childress practices his uncertainties. Jeanne is French, beautiful, rich, cultivated, artistic, sensual, etc.,

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etc., and she loves Childress and he loves her. If he takes her away from her husband and marries her he'll have consummation, leisure, appreciation, luxury. "He would get what every serious photographer desired, the best possible working conditions and a wife who understood his work." At one time, when American intellectuals expatriated themselves for the sake of culture and sensibility, when the highest goal was Art, Jeanne—instead of being lined up as a problem on an equal plane with her antagonist, the American "heiress of all the ages"—would have turned up at the end of the story as The Solution. But now, it seems, Culture, Beauty, Sensuality, have found their antithesis—and it is not morality, at least not in the old sense, though Jeanne mistakenly thinks Childress wants to leave her because of the puritanical *"masochisme américaine"*; it is the desire for strength and rulership.

This headiness lets in Mollie, a big-shot career woman to whom Childress was once married and whose image he can no more shake off than the Freudian patient can shake off his mother. Mollie is also beautiful, a Senator's niece, toast of high officials, impersonal and ferocious in bed though frigid, and Childress can't stand her but he loves her too. She is his "hard home-grown destiny." But her real appeal is that she is America as an opportunity for the intellectual to exert leadership:

"I see that you really have no plan for your life at all," Childress says. "You seem amazingly self-confident, but you're doomed unless someone else helps you to make the right decisions." "Someone like you?" she asks. "Who else?" answers the future voice of authority, a bit shaken by his own audacity. "I'm the only one who cares enough about you."

Besides Childress and the ladies, there are an Arab whose family is the victim of colonial violence, a philosopher who has survived a concentration camp and who understands life, the avuncular Senator who suggests Senator Wheeler, a stinker of a British Army officer who paints pictures and hates the United States. Nothing much happens in the novel—a trip to the Kasbah is a high point in both description and characterization. But maybe nothing much should happen in a novel devoted to the theme of meaning-as-American, since for Americans action and happening are more or less the opposite of self-consciousness.

When one is interested in culture, one is interested in humanity, and in oneself as a human being. When one is interested in power—one doesn't know what one wants. In the end, Childress turns his back on the Old World, not because, like earlier "exiles," he has learned from it to appreciate the United States as a rich scene whose human meaning he must try to decipher, and which he can serve intellectually by contributing to its consciousness of itself. He chooses America as a man defeated into signing up, with a heroic flourish, for the "tough game" of mastery.

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A Conversion

The Pillar of Fire. By Karl Stern. Harcourt, Brace. 316 pp. $3.50.

Reviewed by Moshe Decter

This book is the story of the conversion of a Jew to Catholicism. The author, a German Jewish psychiatrist presently residing in Montreal, has not given us his complete life story because, in all humility, he does not believe his readers will be interested in it, as such. Instead,

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he has constructed here a continuous, but somewhat impressionistic, narrative of those autobiographical elements which, in retrospect, seem to explain the motives that impelled him to his "spiritual voyage" to the baptismal font.

Surely, the acquisition of an overpowering religious faith has always been a fascinating spiritual phenomenon. And today one may legitimately ask—whether with concern, sympathy, or mere curiosity, but always with a kind of fascination—why does a Jew convert to Christianity, assuming, as one clearly must in Dr. Stern's case, the authenticity of the religious impulse? And why, above all, a Jew who is a practicing psychoanalyst; who fancied himself, at one time or another, an Orthodox Jew, a Zionist, and a Marxist; whose rather typical German Jewish family background produced a younger brother who became a schoolteacher in a Palestinian *kibbutz;* and the rest of whose family perished at the hands of the Nazi murderer?

Dr. Stern has said in the foreword: "To write the story of a conversion is a foolish undertaking, for the convert . . . is a fool . . . in the sense in which Saint Paul uses this word. All stories of conversion appear to have something subjective-arbitrary, some tragic secret. The communication contains something incommunicable." However, since Dr. Stern has attempted this communication, we must in fairness to him attempt somehow to evaluate it on the basis of criteria which he would himself accept. If we cannot approach his problem on the level of faith, we can at least attempt to discuss it in a spirit of charity.

In a strictly autobiographical sense, Dr. Stern presents a series of rather charming scenes of what appears to have been a quite idyllic childhood and adolescence. There is the apparently devoutly observant and completely Orthodox grandfather who is rather glad that his children are "emancipated" (Dr. Stern does not speculate on the reasons for this strange attitude, beyond reasserting that grandfather *was* sincerely Orthodox); there is the rest of the family, the parents and uncles, all of them typically marked by the more or less cultured liberalism and tolerance of the "emancipated" middle-class German Jewish household; and there is the ironically amusing scene, following his visit home for his Bar Mitzvah celebration from the Gymnasium in Munich—where he had been influenced by the complete Orthodoxy of the family with which he had been boarding—when his entire family, including his pious grandfather, horrified by his new religiosity, converges upon him and finally persuades him to return to "sanity."

Superficially, his young manhood followed a relatively normal course: medical studies, interneship, psychological specialization. But there was also intellectual, political, and social ferment: his confrontation with poverty, disease, and dialectical materialism; the variety of youth movements and groups through which he passed—religious Zionists, Marxist Zionists, liberal German Jewish groups, etc.; and the variety of social types whom he met and was influenced by: the doctors, psychiatrists, musicians —and pious Catholic housemaids.

His religious influences were surprisingly varied. In 1933, at the age of twenty-seven, he had a Guggenheim fellowship at a famous German psychiatric institute (and because of the American source of the foundation, he thus occupied a privileged position in an otherwise *Judenfrei* environment). He used to spend Friday nights and Saturdays in the home of a pious and learned Jewish doctor, whose religious spirituality deeply impressed him—he was once again turning to the observance and some of the learning of Orthodox Judaism. At the same time, he was equally impressed by the piety and faith of a Japanese Christian couple at the Institute. And, over a span of a number of years, Stern was overwhelmed by the simple but firm piety and faith of several elderly Catholic housemaids whom he had encountered in various households. There seems to be a relation—between the recurrent theme of devout housemaids and of his self-effacing mother and the all-embracing but virginal motherhood of the Church—which Stern, for all his being a psychiatrist, did not probe.

ALL these developing experiences and impressions were brought to a spiritual climax by an anti-Nazi, or rather, "pro-Semitic" sermon delivered by Cardinal Faulhaber in 1933, in which he very simply but clearly stated that Jesus was a Jew and that his God, and the God of the Church, is none other than the God of

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Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. In a flash, meaning and coherence were suddenly given to Stern's previous thoughts and beliefs. He already believed in revelation, and in the Messiah. Now he saw that the piety and spirituality of his Orthodox Jewish friends and his Christian friends were closely related. In fact, they were essentially the same—in fact, the Christian God is the Jewish God, and Christianity is Judaism. Only—

Only, they are, after all, not the same, since Christianity is, for Stern, clearly a higher form of Judaism. This is to say—Christianity affirms and believes everything of essential importance in Judaism, it possesses the same God, the same ethics, the same piety and spirituality. But it is Judaism ". . . cleansed of its ethnic elements . . . its racism," and all this through the medium of the Messiah who has already come.

Now this is of course common Christian apologetics, and Stern does not neglect to proliferate further the elaborate Christian argumentation concerning the spiritual relationship between Judaism and Christianity, the meaning of Jewish "election," the role of the Messiah, and Jewish ethnicism. The interesting thing is that Stern, so to speak, became a Christian in order to be a better Jew, for he contends that Christianity's basic doctrines are virtually explicit in Judaism and that his arguments are based on specifically traditional Jewish concepts and traditional interpretations of such concepts.

It would be futile to undertake a detailed refutation of the misunderstandings from which this point of view flows, a point of view based on the kind of half- or quarter-knowledge (it is as common among Jews as among Christians and converts) that parades as easy familiarity and that is more dangerous than total ignorance. Suffice it to remark here that the Jewish "election" was never taken by the Jews to be for the purpose of spreading the Revealed Word among the nations; it was, rather, a contractual undertaking of responsibility to *live* the Revealed Word, as individuals, and as a group. Furthermore, the Jewish people never understood its acceptance of revelation in terms of its future production of someone, a Messiah, whether he would be the son of God, God Incarnate, or not; this notion can only by the wildest stretch of the imagination be derived by pious Christians from completely distorted and mistranslated texts. It is folly, similarly, to assert that the Jews were the founders of nationalist ideology, in any sense: a spurious nationalism was given up no less by Rabbi Johanan ben Zakkai than by Jesus; and let it not be forgotten that Jesus did not repudiate the title of King of the Jews.

In a final section entitled "Letter to My Brother" (the *chalutz*), which, for all its being an attempt merely to "explain" himself, barely misses being an effort to "persuade," Stern sums up his conclusions. He rejects in turn, before finally arriving at Catholicism, four possible solutions to the problem of Jewish suffering: despair, dialectical materialism, Jewish nationalism, scientism. (He does not seriously consider a fifth alternative—Judaism.) One must certainly accept the sincerity of his faith, but one thing is clear: he has not turned out to be the Paulinian fool he promised to be in his foreword. He has communicated but little of the tormented mind and soul that accompany that type of "foolishness"; he has certainly not shown us a man touched in any way by the passion and the power, the tragic drama, and the pathos of an Augustine, a Tertullian, or of a Saul of Tarsus. He has, in fact, retained too much of the sophistication of the middle-class and professional German Jew to have shown us the religious fool.

Jews and Greeks

HELLENISM IN JEWISH PALESTINE. By SAUL LIEBERMAN. Jewish Theological Seminary of America. xiv+231 pp. $7.00.

Reviewed by MOSES HADAS

A RECORD of the proceedings of a body of 20th-century rabbis, no matter how determined they might be to maintain distinctiveness in outlook and language within the general American culture, must prove imperfectly intelligible to 40th-century students not at home in the languages, ideas, and cultural usages by which the 20th-century rabbis are surrounded. Similarly, scholars have long been aware that words (and less frequently, ideas) in the Jewish writings of the first centuries before and after the Common Era could only be understood by reference to Greek and Roman usage; but the tendency to regard rabbinic literature in isolation has persisted, just as classical scholars tend to regard Greek literature in isolation. No derogation of Greek originality and the peculiar qualities of Greek genius is involved in the

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modern realization that the Greeks learned from their neighbors, especially in the early and late periods of their literature, nor is the achievement of the rabbis depreciated by the realization that they too were affected by other intellectual atmospheres.

In his earlier *Greek in Jewish Palestine,* Professor Lieberman argued that the rabbis knew Greek and were cognizant of their Greek environment, and he showed how selected obscure passages in rabbinic literature might be illuminated by reference to the Greek background. His present work is essentially a continuation, with the emphasis rather on the usages than on the language of Hellenism. In his own words, and with his own proper *caveat,* he has "sought to demonstrate the great similarities among the methods, behavior, practices, and notions prevalent among Jews and Gentiles alike. Although some of them may have been the heritage left by a more distant and simpler age, many of the others were nevertheless probably the result of direct contact and close relations among the various peoples in the Hellenistic Mediterranean world." The area in which Professor Lieberman discovers similarities includes such matters as methods of transmission and interpretation of sacred texts, cult patterns, temple structure, furniture, and procedures, and natural science. None of the rubrics receives extended or systematic treatment; the method is to subject selected passages upon which some Greco-Roman source may throw light to acute philological examination. The author's learning is sound, his procedures meticulous, and his conclusions in most cases convincing and in all cases plausible. Texts that are difficult or obscure are illuminated, and the range suggests that the same method applied to other passages and other rubrics would yield similar results.

But what the reader concerned with ideas rather than philology might wish for is an extension of the investigation to the realm of philosophical outlook and fundamental beliefs. Professor Lieberman's work carries implications which his scheme does not permit him to elaborate, and which, indeed, he may himself be unwilling to accept. May not the Greek element in modes of thought as well as in practices have been a substantial influence in this formative period of Judaism? In dealing with the Maccabean period Professor Elias Bickerman has set forth the novel proposition that certain political concepts, religious observances, and beliefs which have been regarded as peculiarly Jewish were in fact adapted from Greek usages. Influence in the opposite direction also is greater than has generally been acknowledged; the present reviewer, for example, believes that the *Aeneid,* which exerted enormous influence on political and religious attitudes, could not have been written if Vergil had not been familiar with certain Alexandrian Jewish ideas. And what of the central fact in the Jewish history of the period, the transformation of a nationalism into a religious communion? The Greeks under Roman domination had done something similar before Johanan ben Zakkai and the siege of Jerusalem: could Johanan and his peers have learned from them?

Our new knowledge of ancient Semitic epic and drama (as presented in Theodor Gaster's magnificent *Thespis*) has removed the insulation from Homer and Aeschylus, without in the least diminishing their stature, and has provided illuminated corridors in a world previously hermetically compartmentalized. *Ilu v'ilu divre Elohim hayim:* these words and those alike are words of the living God. Work in continuation of Professor Lieberman's may do even more for a nearer and more relevant period. For not having pursued to their end the trails suggested by his own work, but not part of his plan, Professor Lieberman cannot of course be criticized. He is rather to be thanked for a fine scholarly contribution and for the stimulus to further study which it provides.

Book Reviewers in this Issue

Saul Bellow is the author of *The Victim* and *Dangling Man.*

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TO OUR READERS

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(July-December 1950)
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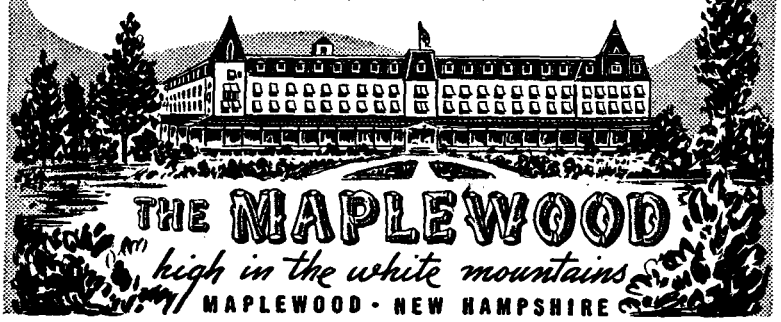

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Three Meetings on Cultural Freedom

I. FREEDOM AND SOCIAL PROGRESS

May 3, 8:15 p. m.

Are cultural freedom and social progress dependent on each other? Or are they relatively autonomous?

Speakers:

Max Ascoli, Editor, *The Reporter*
Daniel Bell, Associate Editor, *Fortune*
Peter Viereck, Pulitzer Prize poet, Professor of History, Mt. Holyoke College

Chairman:

Lionel Trilling, Professor of English, Columbia University

II. FREEDOM AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

May 10, 8:15 p. m.

What are the social responsibilities, if any, of the scientist, artist, and writer?

Speakers:

Elliot E. Cohen, Editor, COMMENTARY
Jacques Maritain, Professor of Philosophy, Princeton University
Allen Tate, poet and critic

Chairman:

William Phillips, Editor, *Partisan Review*

III. FREEDOM AND MYTH

May 17, 8:15 p. m.

What are: The totalitarian myth compulsions of our age? The attractions and snares of Stalinism? The anti-anti-Communist?

Speakers:

Arthur Koestler, author
Arthur Schlesinger Jr., Pulitzer Prize historian, Professor of History, Harvard University
Diana Trilling, literary critic

Chairman:

Sidney Hook, Professor of Philosophy, New York University

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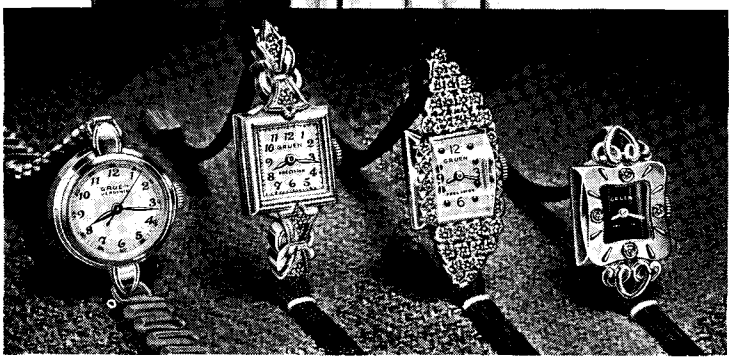

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